

DECEMBER 2007 / JANUARY 2008

30 DIGIMAG

DIGITAL ART AND ELECTRONIC CULTURE

GRAFFITI RESEARCH LAB / LIMITEAZERO
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DIGICULT

Digital Art, Design & Culture

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Publisher:

Associazione Culturale Digicult

Largo Murani 4, 20133 Milan (Italy)

<http://www.digicult.it>

Editorial Press registered at Milan Court, number N°240 of 10/04/06.

ISSN Code: 2037-2256

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Printed and distributed by Lulu.com

E-publishing development:

Loretta Borrelli

Cover design:

Eva Scaini

Digicult is part of the The Leonardo Organizational Member Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Domenico Quaranta	
The Gate: Open Considerations – Part 2	3
Monica Ponzini	
Blip Festival: Chiptune Music & Low Bit Visuals	7
Alessandra Migani	
Mike Mills: Humans Before All!	9
Lucrezia Cippitelli	
Art And Activism In The Showbusiness Era	14
Loredana Menghi	
Sex Is A Pain In The Ass	17
Claudia D'Alonzo	
X-scape: Escape From Language	23
Marco Mancuso	
Limiteazero, Infinite Limits	28
Teresa De Feo	
Tafkav And A Flower Called Vanda	41
Bertram Niessen	
Andrea Marutti: Italian Experimental Underground	47
Claudia Moriniello	
Live!ixem, The Five Days Of Palermo	55
Monica Ponzini	
Graffiti Research Lab: Writers As Hackers As Artists	61

Teresa De Feo	
Gordan Savicic: Technosurveillance Martyr	69
Luigi Pagliarini	
Polymorphic Intelligence: Part 2	71
Silvia Scaravaggi	
Mutamorphosis: Challenging Arts And Science	75
Giuseppe Cordaro	
Zymogen.net, Italian Netlabel Grow Up	81
Marco Mancuso	
The Unbearable Lightness Of The Web	87
Annamaria Monteverdi	
Festival Cultania, Culture From Southern Italy	90
Annamaria Monteverdi	
The Importance Of Being Interactive	96

The Gate: Open Considerations – Part 2

Domenico Quaranta



The Gate (or Hole in Space, Reloaded) è un'installazione realizzata per la mostra inaugurale dell' iMAL Center for Digital Cultures and Technology di Brussels (4 - 10 ottobre 2007).

Nata da un'idea di Yves Bernhard, direttore dell'iMAL, l'installazione intendeva affrontare una questione solo apparentemente semplice: come creare un ponte tra spazio reale e mondi virtuali, in modo tale da permettere la fruizione di questi ultimi (e l'interazione con i loro abitanti) nello spazio fisico, senza la mediazione dell'interfaccia grafica. Il problema si è già posto più volte, e la soluzione adottata – la proiezione, nello spazio reale, di uno streaming video dal mondo virtuale – ha dimostrato più volte di non funzionare. The Gate non ha risolto il problema, e la soluzione che ha

trovato alla fine di un percorso abbastanza accidentato è ben lontana dall'essere definitiva. Tuttavia, un passo avanti c'è stato, e diversa gente, da un lato e dall'altro, ha tentato di superare la soglia.

Nello scorso numero di questa rivista abbiamo riportato la prima parte del resoconto di questa esperienza: concludiamo il racconto dei fatti in questo numero...

The Gate: il primo giorno

L'evento inaugurale, la sera del 4 ottobre 2007, è un successo, almeno in termini di audience. Lo spazio reale è saturo, l'angolo di Odyssey scelto per la performance anche, ai limiti della sostenibilità. La performance di Second Front è visivamente affascinante, il decadentismo di Rodin e il kitsch sintetico di Second Life sembrano aver trovato un ottimo anello di congiunzione. Ma... c'è un ma. Alcuni avatar trovano la performance un po' noiosa: non è facile fargli capire che i performer devono tenere conto anche di un altro pubblico, una platea di alieni per cui ciò che a loro appare scontato risulta folle ed efficace. E tuttavia, anche questo pubblico di alieni, seppur

affascinato, non capisce del tutto cosa stia accadendo. Non capisce di essere spettatore di una performance, e non capisce che può mandare dei segnali ai performer, tentare di interagire con loro.



Non capisce, in altre parole, di essere dentro lo schermo. Non lo capisce perché non *si vede*. Concentrati sulla simmetria delle due installazioni, non ci siamo resi conto che, ancora una volta, la performance appare non come un evento in diretta, ma come un video su uno schermo. E facendo affidamento su *Hole in Space*, non ci siamo resi conto che se quest'ultimo connetteva due realtà analoghe, noi stiamo creando un ponte tra due mondi totalmente differenti. Uno (lo spazio reale) è familiare a persone e avatar, l'altro è ben noto ai secondi ma non necessariamente ai primi. I due spazi che volevamo far comunicare rimangono separati, non interagiscono. Perché?

Personalmente, sono convinto che il nostro errore sia stato pensare che bastasse connettere i due spazi, nella speranza che ciascuno agisse nel suo mondo sapendo di essere visto dall'altra parte. Su questo presupposto, la cosa poteva funzionare (e funzionerà, come vedremo subito), a patto che esistesse un elemento di condivisione, sulla base del quale costruire l'interazione. Conclusa la performance di Second Front, Gazira Babeli installa sopra il portale il suo ultimo lavoro: un gigantesco rubinetto che vomita sul tappeto nero del *Gate* ogni sorta di oggetti, intasando completamente lo spazio della rappresentazione. La scultura, chiamata *Ursonate*, è accompagnata, appunto, dalla celebre *Ursonate* dell'artista dada Kurt Schwitters. Sentendola, due componenti del pubblico "reale" si mettono a danzare al centro dell'installazione, offrendo al pubblico di Second Life il "loro" spettacolo. La musica proveniente da Second Life offre una base all'interazione.

La danza, e poi Gazira nuda spiacciata sullo schermo che proietta in Second Life il pubblico reale, mi fanno riflettere. Abbiamo tenuto separati i due spazi, invece avremmo dovuto creare un "terzo luogo" in cui questi due spazi convivono. E questo spazio è dentro allo schermo. Abbiamo fatto riferimento a *Hole in Space*, ma avremmo dovuto guardare

Con la complicità di Yannick, Gazira ha inglobato il nostro schermo all'interno della porta di Rodin, che gli fa da maestosa cornice. I due spazi si sono fusi. Gaz si mette a giocare con il pubblico della mostra, e appena prima di ripartire per l'Italia grida: «Dites una serie di immagini fenomenali. Le ha chiamate _____». La mostrano, nuda e a testa in giù come un pipistrello, mentre punta una pistola alla testa di uno degli artisti in mostra (Erland Jacobsen Lòpez, che come Gazira ama le chitarre: <http://eil.net/ejL/>). L'interazione si sviluppa spontaneamente attraverso gesti, grida, pantomime, bigliettini scarabocchiati a matita ("I don't have a computer", dice uno) e, sull'altro fronte, oggetti volanti, eventi e ancora gesti.

The Gate

Nei giorni seguenti, è stato quello che voleva essere: una sorta di peep-show bidirezionale, un luogo di performance spontanee e di interazione. C'era chi danzava e chi salutava, chi è arrivato con un violoncello per suonare Bach, chi recitava Kafka e chi si è fatto crescere i capelli fino al punto da dare vita a un nuovo essere alieno, dotato di vita propria. È arrivato anche un troglodita, che parlava una lingua sconosciuta. È stata raccolta molta documentazione, e sono state raccontate tante storie. Alcune devo ancora sentirle.



The Gate: “interacting with aliens”

Per fortuna, non sono l'unico ad aver avuto la stessa idea. Il giorno dopo, quando torno all'iMAL, trovo l'installazione leggermente cambiata.



visitatori reali a comunicare e a dare spettacolo. Si potrebbero progettare performance molto semplici che avvengano parallelamente nei due spazi, come la danza sincronizzata di Galloway e Rabinowitz. è un progetto che merita un seguito: se non saremo noi, spero che sia qualcun altro a darglielo.

Ovviamente, c'è ancora molto da fare: ma la direzione sembra quella giusta. Bisognerebbe fare in modo che lo streaming audio, come quello video, sia bidirezionale, a costo di generare confusione. Siamo usciti da Babele, risolveremo anche questa. Bisognerebbe provvedere i due palcoscenici di piccoli tool per lo spettacolo e l'interazione: oggetti che aiutino gli avatar meno esperti a fare qualcosa di più che danzare, salutare e scattare fotografie, e che aiutino i

www.imal.org/

<http://odysseyart.ning.com/>

www.gazirababeli.com/

www.artificialia.com/peam2006/

www.0100101110101101.org/home/performances/index.html

<http://slfront.blogspot.com/>

www.ecafe.com/getty/table.html

www.domenicoquaranta.net/blog/

The Gate

Blip Festival: Chiptune Music & Low Bit Visuals

Monica Ponzini



Game Boy's devotees and Commodore 64 s fans: Blip Festival is back! For four days New York had been the centre of the electronic world of the 80s aesthetic and of its current reinterpretations.

This year the New York association The Tank together with the 8bitpeoples collective have brought the festival to the Eyebeam Atelier - a cultural centre dedicated to digital arts - to celebrate chiptune music and low-bit visual art proving that, rather than being an underground movement or the remains of the past, they have gathered more and more followers.

As a matter of fact, about forty international artists mixed 8 bit bases spanning from electro-techno-house to rock, or created visuals based on

old fashion games. For some of them that was the celebration of their childhood they spent playing with the Game Boy , for others the discover from scratch of vintage-electronic devices. The reward for organizers' passion and dedication, was the big and enthusiastic audience of what has been renamed the "Chip Music Woodstock". Beside audio and video performances, there were workshops, presentations and the projection of the documentary film 8-Bit Generation by Lionel Brouet .



This year's lineup included both "known artists" who performed last years and new artists who contribute to make the group of chiptune performer bigger and bigger. Tree Wave's noise pop, Bubblyfish's minimalism, The Depreciation Guild's

ballads, Mark DeNardo's folktronic rhythms, Anamanaguchi's instrumental mix, Rugar's melodies Hally's experimentalism were some of the examples of the variety and flexibility of a genre which starts from basic means and develops blending with other musical traditions.

As far as visual works were concerned, artists reinterpreted the basic figurative aesthetics of Atari and Game Boy with a "leap in the past". The much expected Festival's co-organizers Nullsleep and Bit Shifter from 8bitpeoples, performed brilliantly, with their enthralling mixes of 8bits and electronic sounds.

Among the international artists, there were two Italian artists too, NrGiGa and Postal_m@rket. They said about the festival: "It's interesting how the different styles, from different countries, here meet. The audience is actively more involved and American scene is definitely more mature than the Italian one, which has started to develop recently but which is growing though".



Again this year the festival was a reference point for boundary music, a real crossing of scenes and styles, but most of all of the poetics that can be generated by modified situations, essential graphic styles and re-set sound chips, when creativity has no limits. Waiting for next year's edition .

<http://www.blipfestival.org/>

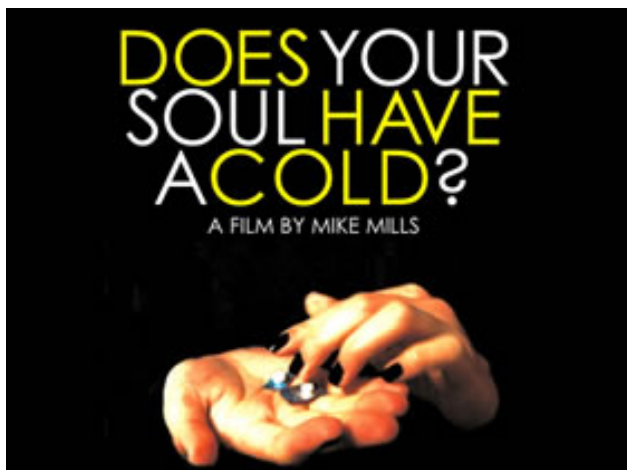
<http://www.thetanknyc.org/>

<http://www.8bitpeoples.com/>

<http://www.eyebeam.org/>

Mike Mills: Humans Before All!

Alessandra Migani



La 51ma edizione del London Film Festival ha offerto anche quest'anno un programma ricchissimo con incredibili anteprime ed ospiti.

Devo aver scelto inconsapevolmente i film più toccanti del festival, dato che mi sono commossa per la maggior parte dei film che ho visto. Oppure, il senso di incertezza e instabilità che viviamo in questi anni e le ansie quotidiane che combattiamo di continuo, permeano in maniera così prepotente le 'immagini in movimento' su grande schermo, da riuscire a stabilire una comunicazione sottile con la sensibilità dello spettatore.

Non a caso, una delle gemme presenti, il documentario girato quest'anno dal regista americano Mike Mills, 'Does your soul have a

cold?' indaga la depressione in Giappone attraverso le storie di cinque ragazzi in cura per la citata malattia. Mills ha realizzato numerosi music videos per artisti quali Yoko Ono, Moby, Air, Blonde Redhead, cortometraggi ed il suo primo lungometraggio, Thumbsucker, e' del 2005.

Il film presentato al festival e' il suo primo documentario. Il titolo è tratto da una campagna pubblicitaria di una nota casa farmaceutica, la GlaxoSmithKleine, realizzata per il mercato giapponese, contro la depressione.



In effetti, anche se sembra incredibile a credersi, la depressione viene riconosciuta come malattia in Giappone solo alla fine degli anni

novanta e se ne comincia a parlare più diffusamente solo a partire da quegli anni. Le case editrici infatti pubblicano libri sull'argomento, mentre le case farmaceutiche, come avvoltoi, si impadroniscono di una nuova fetta di mercato che si dimostra, all'epoca, ancora incontaminata.

In una Tokyo frenetica, descritta visivamente in apertura del film da una serie bellissima di immagini in un susseguirsi di tagli di montaggio, Mills sceglie appunto le storie di cinque persone vittime della depressione. I racconti e le storie si intersecano con

le immagini di una vita scandita da farmaci e senso di diversità dal mondo circostante.

I cinque ragazzi si confessano di fronte la videocamera. Il regista si reca nelle loro case dove molti di loro trascorrono la maggior parte del tempo, li segue come un occhio vigile durante i loro gesti quotidiani sin dal risveglio al mattino, nelle uscite e negli incontri fuori dagli appartamenti. La voce off del regista pone le domande, si sente inoltre la presenza di un traduttore, mentre i dialoghi dei protagonisti sono in giapponese con sottotitoli in inglese.



La videocamera testimonia le loro vite, indaga, ricerca nelle stanze dei cinque protagonisti forse delle tracce, oppure degli elementi ed degli oggetti che parlino per loro. C'è molto silenzio lungo tutto il documentario, sono piuttosto le immagini a parlare: le espressioni, i volti, i gesti, gli oggetti di uso quotidiano.

Purtroppo emerge da questi ragazzi un senso di solitudine profonda, una difficoltà costante di comunicare e avvicinarsi all'essere umano, un senso di disagio verso se stessi ed il mondo esterno. La consapevolezza della malattia almeno permette loro di parlarne apertamente di fronte la videocamera. Uno di loro, Taketoshi, conferma come solo in anni recenti sia cambiato in Giappone il modo di affrontare la malattia, di riconoscerla come tale. Lui stesso ha acquistato molti libri sull'argomento, confessando però come fosse difficile trovarne in anni passati. 'Utsu' è la parola giapponese per il termine

'depressione' ed è oggi riconosciuta ed usata. Tutte le ulteriori informazioni che il regista vuole dare sono inserite con scritte bianche sovrapposte al filmato. Alcune di queste scritte comunicano i nomi dei medicinali e le dosi assunte.

Non tutti seguono una terapia e l'uso di antidepressivi è costante e smoderato per alcuni di loro. I medicinali, molti dei quali distribuiti da case americane, sono usati inizialmente come un aiuto indispensabile per la cura della malattia. L'America stessa è molto idealizzata in Giappone, alcuni dei ragazzi intervistati pensano che tutto quello che proviene da lì debba essere buono per forza. Da subito dopo la guerra, in effetti, il paese orientale si è avviato rapidissimamente sulla strada della capitalizzazione, seguendo il modello americano.



Daisuke è un programmatore, non

esce mai di casa, passa ore davanti al suo computer in un appartamento di un disordine cronico, conserva una quantita' infinita di medicinali all'interno di una scatola di cartone e assume delle dosi senza controllo medico e accompagnate da alcolici.

Mika per ironia del destino forse, distribuisce medicinali per lavoro, vive con la madre e parla dei propri demoni interiori.

Kayoko confessa che ogni volta che parla con qualcuno comincia a piangere, la sua vita sociale e' difficilissima, non ha piu' rapporti con i suoi genitori. Durante la sua intervista confessa di ritrovarsi a combattere contro gli antidepressivi piuttosto che la depressione stessa.

Ken invece prova piacere e sollievo nel partecipare in spettacoli dove viene legato e sospeso nel vuoto. Vive in un appartamento dove il futon occupa interamente la stanza da letto e la confusione regna sovrana. Durante l'estate trova confortevole uscire con un paio di jeans attillati tagliati al sedere e scarpe col tacco.



Il regista non interviene assolutamente con un giudizio, descrive semplicemente i fatti e lascia lo spettatore solo con le proprie riflessioni, mentre i titoli di coda scorrono senza musica.

L'approccio documentaristico sembra un terreno molto consono per il regista americano, che ama usare la videocamera come occhio che osserva e registra. L'essere umano e' al centro della sua ricerca e probabilmente Mills indaga i limiti che sente propri e che forse riesce a risolvere attraverso il suo lavoro. Non a caso, l'ultimo progetto di Mills, intitolato Humans, inserisce temi personali in oggetti di produzione industriale come posters, t-shirts, borse, tessuti.

Incredibili anche la serie di music videos per Blonde Redhead girati quest'anno; sono perfetti ed impeccabili nella loro semplicita' quanto per l'impatto emotivo raggiunto. Protagonisti ancora una volta i volti, i corpi, angoli della citta', le parole. Top Ranking con Miranda July e' il risultato incredibile di un'idea semplicissima: una mossa al secondo. My Impure Hair e' una ripresa a camera fissa di una strada in una citta' americana. The dress solo primi piani di persone in lacrime su sfondo nero.

In *Silently*, le parole in bianco su schermo nero descrivono l'azione.



della gente, di catturare le emozioni su quei volti. In una recente intervista, Mills confessa di essere interessato alle persone che faticano a trovare il loro posto nel mondo, che cercano di trovare una via possibile.

Mi verrebbe da pensare che il regista voglia filmare l'anima, cercando di raggiungere quello che rende prezioso e speciale ognuno di noi, compresi i nostri limiti di esseri umani.

Quello che si evince dal lavoro di Mills e' un profondo amore per l'essere umano ed e' la videocamera il mezzo che gli permette di ispezionare i volti

http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/lff/film_programme/world_cinema/does_your_soul_have_cold

<http://mikemillsweb.com/index.php>

Art And Activism In The Showbusiness Era

Lucrezia Cippitelli



What if the artists suddenly stops working with the traditional means of contemporaneous art (and with the Avant-garde's expression strategies), what if he makes a review to the existing reality through the construction of a metaphorical talk representing it, so unveiling the undergoing mechanisms? What is he makes a direct intervention on reality creating situations able to change and improve it? And if he gets engaged on a political point of view?

In few words, what happens if the artist decided to discuss the social context no more depicting it and aligning to the "Good ", but playing the role of the "Wicked"?

A recent book published by the independent and avant-garde editor Episode Publishers in Rotterdam

offers an analysis of the activism in the contemporaneous world. For this description he makes use of the idea of Over-identification as hermeneutical term, that is to say the total agreement and unequivocal participation of the artist to the social dynamics he wants to criticize and deconstruct. This is a mechanism called D tournement by historic Avant-garde and Surrealism in particular. It implied the use of activities, communication strategies and languages belonging to the production world (trade, advertising)and government (red taps and media) to reveal them from the inside, emptying them of all meaning and giving them back to the public or watchers with a new sense. These strategies are filtered out and developed in billion of different channels through the work of the Neo-Avant-garde (and above by the Situationist International), then through those experiences mid-way between art and political activism. Stewart Home defines them as Utopian Movements in his essay Assault on culture , what I consider fundamental to understand the most part of art researches, experimental upon present, translated in Italian by

the epochal AAA Edizioni, almost unavailable today).



BAVO is an independent collective working on research and cultural reviews set up in Rotterdam by the architects Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels. They explain the issue as : " What if art would fully identify with and affirm the prevailing norms, values, practices, etc., even adding some oil to the fire? [...] The latter would ask of them [the artists] to stop protecting society from what it wants and turn it into the worst version of itself, so as to confront it with its own unsustainability and undesirability".

Cultural Activism Today - The Art of Overidentification is the publication of a conference hold in Amsterdam in Januar 2006. It tries to explore the over identification strategies used by artists and the system considered as resistance action, through the essays and critical texts by Boris Groys, Alexei Monroe, Dieter Lesage, Benda

Hofmeyr, beside the very same collective BAVO. All them draw the possible map of artistic experiences working, at different degrees, on the everyday social and political reality. The essays take as references famous artists also renowned by the mainstream of contemporaneous art such as Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschorn, and more experimental projects such as those of the Yes Man, of the collective Irwin (the most known as cited in the recent book about art in the Post-Soviet Europe, called East Art Map and released in 2006 by MIT Press). And then the Slovenian art collective and e industrial band Laibach, Atelier Van Lieshout and others, among them the producer and film maker (above all of shorts) Michael Moore. If criticism and the setting of possible improved situations failed (as happened in all the Utopias), art could have an influence on reality, reviewing and making a revival of it.

BAVO

These words are perhaps not immediately understandable, unless you come in touch with the artists cited in various essays, as shown by a sharp debate in the mailing list My Creativity just in the days following the book publishing. In the mailing list participants talked indeed about the real meaning of Over-identification, and they often didn't succeed in getting the real main point explained by BAVO. In fact, BAVO's proposal is the upturn of the debate on the political engagement in a perfect Post-Modern style- offering an alternative to the classical ideas of participation and representation, accurately defined by BAVO as " NGO Art ": Humour Noir and sharp and aware judgement, radically changing the plans and demonstrating the

everyday absurd through its exaggeration.

Cultural Activism Today - The Art of Overidentification was shown the public at the Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam on the last 3rd November .The introduction started with a conference and a debate gathering several critics and theorists coming from all the Netherlands (and among them we can't forget to mention Maria Hlavajova, manager at the Utrecht Centre for Contemporary Art (BAK)).

www.bavo.biz

<http://idash.org/mailman/listinfo/my-ci>

Sex Is A Pain In The Ass

Loredana Menghi



E' questo il titolo della rassegna dedicata alla body art, raccontata attraverso le opere di artisti come Matthew Barney , Joseph Beuys e Chris Burden , che si è tenuta dal 30 novembre al 1° dicembre al cinema a luci rosse Avorio di Roma. "Ma è anche un'efficace modo di dire - specifica Complus Event che ha promosso l'evento - utilizzato negli States come reazione a differenti turbamenti". Espressione questa che ben descrive quindi il sentimento del pubblico romano quando si è visto negare dalle istituzioni promesse culturali poi non mantenute.

Ci riferiamo all'operazione di censura calata proprio sulla manifestazione, in un primo momento patrocinata dal Comune di Roma e dal VI Municipio,

di fatto boicottata poco prima del debutto. Un po' come è accaduto, negli stessi giorni, ad un altro attesissimo appuntamento: quello con la musica di Aphex Twin. Ma se per l'artista irlandese il voltafaccia si è espresso con il rifiuto di uno spazio (l'ex Fiera di Roma, inizialmente concessa per l'unica data italiana del tour), per Sex is the Pain in the ass la questione è ben più sottile. Ad esser stato interdetto è stato uno dei temi principali affrontati dal programma, quello della body art radicale. Negata, quindi, l'affermazione di una pratica artistica riconosciuta a livello internazionale ma reputata, dopo le pressioni delle forze di opposizione (AN e Udc), paradossalmente non idonea anzi offensiva per la morale dei cittadini. Le stesse, per capirci, di dichiarato stampo cattolico, ben avezze all'iconografia di martiri sanguinanti e che accettano, come folklore religioso, uomini che si flagellano a sangue in segno di penitenza dinanzi alla sacra effigie del Santo (cerimonia della "Pirduranza", comune nel palermitano durante la Processione pasquale dei Misteri del Cristo morto).



La polemica, alimentata dal quotidiano "Il Giornale", che il 27 settembre scorso titolava "Una rassegna pornografica sponsorizzata dal presidente del VI Municipio", è scattata dopo l'uscita del banner pubblicitario sul sito istituzionale. In risposta, l'Assessore alla cultura Vincenzo Carpenella ha imposto il ritiro di locandine e brochure con sopra apposto lo stemma comunale, creando un danno consistenze alla rassegna che attendeva, dice il curatore Piero Pala "circa 5000 paganti". Non solo. Ha informato che se uno dei video fosse stato proiettato ("Zurreissprobe" (1970) di Gunter Brus, esponente storico dell'Azionismo Viennese) e le performance previste si fossero svolte come consuetudine, ovvero con sospensioni corporee o fakir show, non si sarebbe fatta attendere la denuncia nei confronti degli artisti. Ai Freaks' Bloody Tricks ed agli Skoidlab, rappresentanti italiani delle avanguardie radicali, è

stato addirittura proposto di "mimare" i loro live act, "In blood we trust" e "Finchè morti non ci separi", per risultare in regola con le nuove disposizioni. Richiesta alla quale i due gruppi hanno reagito informando della loro defezione dal progetto, con la lettura di un comunicato contro la censura di fronte al pubblico in sala.

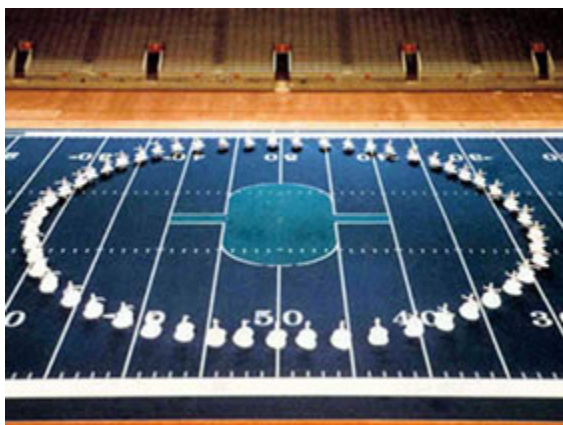
"Provoca due sensazioni opposte la censura riguardo la serata del 30 novembre. Sdegno e incredulità, visto che siamo nel 2007! Lo show doveva svolgersi all'interno di un cinema porno e c'era il divieto ai minori di 18 anni di accedere all'evento. Non sarà un problema farci saltare uno spettacolo. Grazie a chi crede in più alte forme di rispetto, abbiamo a disposizione un intero universo parallelo in cui esprimerci con il nostro linguaggio". I Freaks' Bloody Tricks (www.myspace/freaksbloodytricks) si esibiranno, infatti, il 14 dicembre al Kollatino Underground di Roma, accompagnati dagli Ivs Primae Noctis, nella serata "Noise Session"; fra i partecipanti Mr.3p, Fire at work e la special guest Radium. Anche gli Skoidlab riproporranno lo spettacolo in data da definirsi (<http://www.studiocaronte.org>; <http://www.skoidlab.org>), probabilmente allo studio Caronte, spazio espositivo di Francesco Fragapane, che inaugurerà l'8 Dicembre.



Uscito praticamente illeso, come il suo protagonista Chris Burden, il video "Shoot"(1971), che riporta una delle performance più spettacolari degli anni '70 svoltasi a S.Ana, in California, nel corso del quale l'artista concettuale si fece sparare al braccio sinistro da un suo assistente, da una distanza di 5 m . Molto più estremo, a questo punto della pellicola proibita: 16 min. d'interventi autolesionistici, ultimo atto di un percorso partito 6 anni prima. Se per Gunter Grus, ed in generale per l'Azionismo Viennese, il corpo sottoposto a condizioni limite diventa lo scenario dell'azione, strumento di rivolta e liberazione in risposta alle "malattie del sistema", nel "Cremaster Cycle" di Matthew Barney, invece è inteso come pura potenzialità materica.

I 5 colossal, a metà strada fra video arte e cinema sperimentale, altro non

sono che una grande metafora genitale priva di riferimenti erotici, rappresentata con un flusso continuo di immagini subliminali e sofisticati espedienti visuali dal sapore simbolico e fiabesco, associati a colonne sonore d'eccezione (Johnny Cash, Morbyd Angel, Sleyer). Un'allegoria dei meccanismi biologici, ispirata all'attività del "muscolo cremasterico", sorta di interruttore termico dell'apparato genitale maschile, che alzando la temperatura basale per favorire la produzione di sperma, avvicina le gonadi al corpo tramite contrazioni testicolari. Un catalizzatore, quindi, fra il desiderio, motore del processo vitale, e la sua trasformazione in istinto animale. Nella saga si alternano ~~personaggi~~ ^{personaggi} chiave dell'immaginario di Barney: dal mago Houdini alla Regina ~~Richard~~ ^{Richard} Serra Catene interpretata da , all'architetto del tempio di Salomone Hiram Abiff (lo scultore), fino ad icone dello sport e gangster senza scrupoli, cheerleaders e corridori di side-car, creature mitologiche e coreografie da rivista. L'azione si concentra in teatri prestigiosi, campi da football, pance di palloni aerostatici, in grattacieli fallici come il Chrysler Building o nel ventre del Guggenheim Museum di N.Y.



Gli episodi, privi di un filo logico e temporale, sono stati proiettati all'Avorio in ordine di uscita: Cremaster 4 (1994), Cremaster 1(1995), Cremaster 5(1997), Cremaster 2 (1999), Cremaster 3 (2002). Scelta non casuale del regista, che traccia una sequenza numerica speculare da destra a sinistra (4-1-5-2-3) intorno al 5, numero simbolo per il visual artist: 5 i video, 5 gli atti nella partizione della tragedia greca, 5 le discipline olimpiche ateniesi. Un'occasione per visionare l'opera altrimenti irreperibile. L'intero ciclo, infatti, è stato pubblicato in una serie limitata di 20 dvd.

Presentato anche "Drawing Restraint 9 (2005) che proprio al cinema Avorio debuttò lo scorso anno, raccogliendo 2500 presenze. E' la storia questa di un matrimonio celebrato secondo la tradizione scintoista su una baleniera

nipponica, a largo della baia di Nagasaki: protagonista il filmmaker e la consorte Bjork. Una pellicola priva di dialoghi, che mette in scena la ritualità giapponese, descritta da una fotografia siderale e da atmosfere musicali ricercate, ricreate dalla cantante islandese che ha curato pure la partitura dello "Sho", particolarissimo strumento di sole 3 note, suonato dalla musicista Mayumi Miyata. Fra i due protagonisti una monumentale scultura in vasellina liquida, chiamata "The Field", modellata sul ponte della Nisshin Maru. Quando questa sciogliendosi invade la cabina degli ospiti, in preda ad un delirio mistico gli sposi si amputano gli arti a vicenda. Gesto che presuppone la rinascita e la trasformazione fisica in una nuova forma.

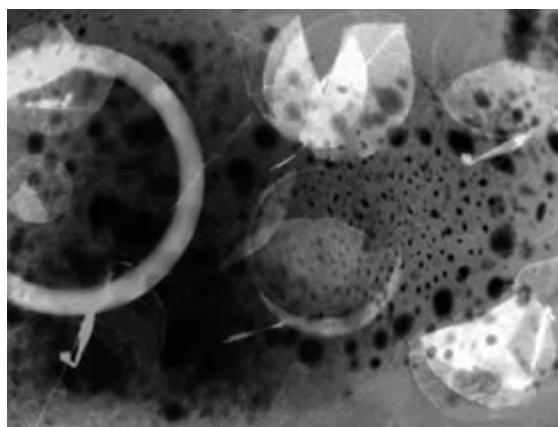
Due invece le anteprime proiettate nella rassegna: il video "Scabaction" (1988) e "Drawing Restraint 13 (2006), documentario della performance eseguita alla Gladstone Gallery di New York nel corso dell'inaugurazione dell'esposizione "The Occidental Guest". Ritorna il tema della vasellina, plasmata in una scultura cuneiforme intitolata come il video, dove il leggendario generale Douglas MacArthur (Barney), si muove per simulare lo sbarco sulle Filippine.



Interessante poi la breve testimonianza del regista Mario Franco "La Rivoluzione Siamo noi"(1971), di una performance a Napoli del tedesco Joseph Beuys. "Ogni cosa che ho fatto" dice, "è correlata al disastro, che è presente e domina anche il Sud". Tema di grande attualità considerando la criticità della questione napoletana dei giorni nostri, inasprita dalle faide di camorra. Noioso invece "Die Fettecke"(1986/87) di Ricardo Peredo , video scultura riguardante la distruzione dell'installazione "Fat Wedge" sempre di Beuys. 40 minuti di proiezione in lingua originale (tedesco) senza neanche un sottotitolo in inglese. Dopo il primo quarto d'ora, in cui il dibattito in sala era incentrato sul fatto se la proiezione fosse stata volutamente proiettata storta o meno, la maggior parte del pubblico si è precipitato sul buffet o concesso una lunga pausa sigaretta.

Bocciata anche l'esposizione delle

opere in mostra di F&D Cartier , Massimo Drago , Giacinto Occhionero . Non per le opere, di sicuro interesse, ma per l'allestimento. L'illuminazione sui quadri è stata accesa su richiesta, mentre completamente assenti erano le didascalie descrittive, tranne che per il collettivo Antonio Salieri . "Cicatrice", dittico elaborato con metallo e acrilico su pergamena di suino, si rifà al tema della memoria lasciato attraverso tutte le tipologie di decorazione contemplate dalla body art. La prima tavola è una sorta d'intevento lirico, la seconda è un'interpretazione materica del segno permanente.



Di seguito "Jour apre Jour" di Francoise e Daniel Cartier. Da una costruzione sparsa fra cataloghi e volantini vari, si evince che il composit, articolato in tre file di 10 fotogrammi ciascuna esposti alla luce del giorno, è una sorta di diario organico: dischi circolari dei capelli della compagna Francoise, raccolti

giorno dopo giorno sul piatto della doccia, la cui forma allude all'orifizio anale. La tonalità dei fotogrammi, giocata sul rosa, altro non è che un errore tipografico, di stampa e sviluppo, deliberatamente scelto come tecnica base su cui la coppia ha sviluppato, oltre a questo diversi progetti.

La scelta del fotogramma è prediletta infine anche dal cagliaritano Massimo

Drago, solito lavorare sul b/n. Ha esposto all'Avorio "Senza titolo", un teschio rappresentato attraverso X ray (le lastre ospedaliere), "consono al contesto della rassegna" spiega Piero Pala, "perchè come dicono gli americani, 'death could be a paining in the ass', usando il condizionale, perchè la morte potrebbe essere un salto nel nulla, ma anche una liberazione".

X-scape: Escape From Language

Claudia D'Alonzo

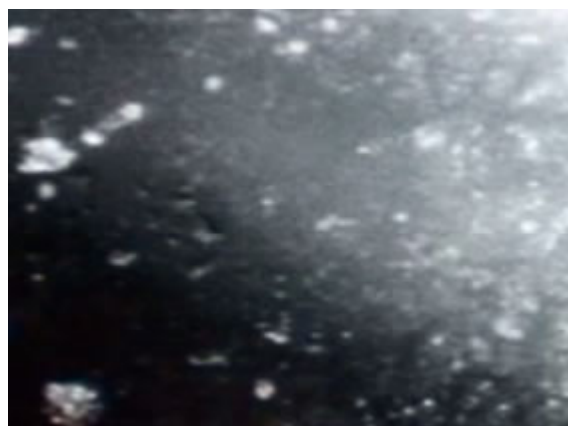


Martux_m aka Maurizio Martusciello, composer, musician and performer since more than 10 years, builds with his sound work and research an important interpenetration between traditional concrete and electro acoustic music and the synthesis of the digital electronic.

His path is open to contamination, to research of overlap between genres, through which he sees new codes of sound languages creation. A stimulated and good research thanks to the constant confrontation and collaboration with musicians, visual artists and video artists. X-Scape, one of his most recent works, was born from the meeting with the video artist Mattia Casalegno. Born in 2005 as audiovisual project, presented in numerous international and Italian events, for example Montreal Mutek

Festival and IXEM Venice Festival, X-Scape has been recently elaborated by the authors as a/v trip in seven tracks, presented in June in limited edition DVD, produced and distributed by Persistencebit.

All the chapters are built as a crescendo, a progressive sedimentation of sound and visual atoms. So, when the first tracks move in a minimal landscape of little acoustic data, distilled by the emptiness together with feeble texture of vectors, the rhythmic game between acoustic stimulation and silence is complicated through the hybridization with dusty sounds dirtied by hidden glitches that move between video textures in subtle equilibrium between organic and inorganic.



We met the authors while presenting X-Scape as multi-screen presentation at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome dated 14th December.

Claudia D'Alonzo: Maurizio, could you tell me how was the project born? How was the live concept ideated and how did you produced the DVD?

Maurizio Martusciello: X-Scape project required lot of time. Everything started from a desire, the desire to escape a language. We're into language and language creates errors, language it's only black holes. Here's were X-Scape desire starts. X-Scape let the significant do the talking, it lets them go away, he lets them escape the obvious. "Desire" as seduction secret, as something before happening must have the time to be necessary. Here's where my first audio-visual work named X-Scape begins, with the precious collaboration of Mattia Casalegno, who exceptionally enriched and developed this project.

I wanted to build an art that is no more breathable, that is no more consolatory and no more where the whorish mask of consolation, that is no more decoration. To get there, we must forget what we are, we must lost all the identities, we must blank out all the expectations. It emerges the essential rapport, the complicity between sight and hearing, to

research what is the object of a memory lack, of the unthinkable in the thought, of the unimaginable in the imaginable.

The production of a DVD was the following idea, a re-building of the live work. So, no more shapes, but kinematics relationships. No more subjects, but dynamic objects without subjects, who constitute collective chains, a plan of longitude and latitude that opposes to an organization plan. Creating middles that are fervor of creation, to be a stranger in its own language.

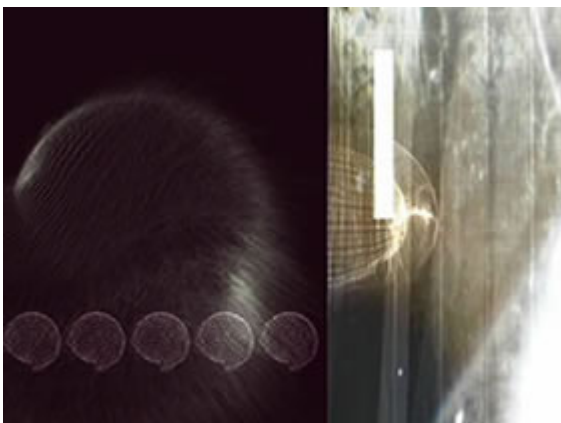


Claudia D'Alonzo: How did you structure the DVD path? I noticed there's a crescendo of both video and sound complexity...

Maurizio Martusciello: "Complicatio" against "semplificatio", for sure. In occidental societies, market laws are more and more projected to a direction where the common opinion and the strengths are deeply

established. New experimental arts must ask themselves how to escape and refuse to be the manifestation, the mark governed by the show managers, by the “killers of art” as Situationists said, who are able to uniform the differences and repress every language of opposition inside the huge systems.

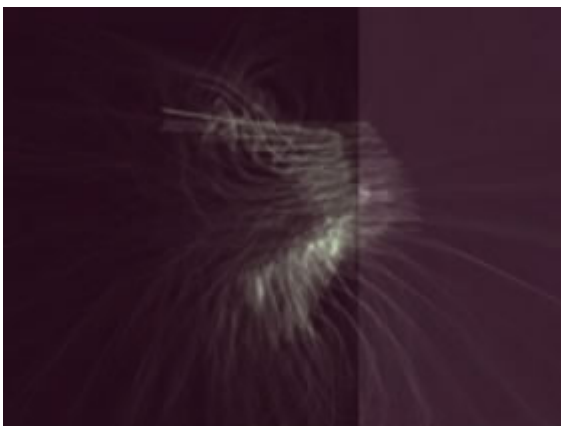
To oppose this, we must think in terms of net systems (x-scape) that pass over the states, over the globalization politics, the uniformed opinion. We must build a complex level where existential different visions can live, can run away from a general program that completely cancel every possibility to diversify or change. Claudia D’Alonzo: Mattia, you started as visual artist inside clubs, being a vj, getting more and more involved in live media, realizing a/v projects together with musicians. How did the meeting with Martusciello influenced your work?



Claudia D’Alonzo: Mattia, you started as visual artist inside clubs, being a vj, getting more and more involved in live media, realizing a/v projects together with musicians. How did the meeting with Martusciello influenced your work?

Mattia Casalegno: I had the opportunity to meet Maurizio almost at the beginning of my work and I owe him a lot, as human and professional as well. Before being an artist I respect, he’s a brotherly friend. He always gave me faith and confidence. It is an honor to work together with him, and he’s also inspiration to me. I’ve been known him since 2001, thanks to our common friendship with Massimo Cavenacci, at that time professor of Cultural Antropology at Rome “La Sapienza” University. I had the occasion to participate to one of his multimedia shows organized by Cavenacci, where I projected the video part and where Maurizio together with Filippo Paolini (aka Okapi), duo called MetaXu, created the audio part. Suddenly, it was affinity and I entered the duo, contributing to the visual part of their performances. MetaXu experience unfortunately ended in 2003, but our friendship and reciprocal trust is still living and brought us to X-Scape, when Maurizio asked me as video artist, to translate his intuitions and ideas in images.

Talking about me, I started experiment with “live” video at the beginning of 2000 with Kinotek, duo founded by me and videomaker Giovanni D’Aloia. As in the beginning Kinotek worked as club vjing, as time went by we worked more and more to projects and collaborations that were installations or theatre. At the same time, I collaborated in “live media” or “live cinema” projects”.



Claudia D’Alonzo: The video tracks that mostly hit me in X-Scape are those in which the vectorial sound analysis mix to material elements, video textures and pictures. Mattia, would you like to talk about the creation of these tracks? How did you interpenetrate organic and inorganic?

Mattia Casalegno: Actually this “interpenetration”, the imaginary zone between “organic” and “inorganic”,

can be one of the conductor of X-Scape. We tried to give a visual perspective of this interpenetration with insertions and overlaps between the most “abstract” materials, such as shapes generated by algorithms or sound analysis, and more “concrete” elements, filming with cameras equipped with powerful macro lens, natural substances. I think the synesthetic result that emerges from X-Scape is focusing on the intuition of turning “invisible strengths” into visible ones, is turning tensions, powers and fluxes into sensitive concepts that expand the real.

Claudia D’Alonzo: Deleuze has explicit references in this work also inside the DVD packaging. There are printings that quote his texts. How did this author influenced the X-Scape project?

Maurizio Martusciello: Foucault said: “One day, maybe, the century will be Deluzeian” and Gilles Deluze left a big heirship through his thought. X-Scape begins from his ideas of resistance, where art represent the only creative strength able to change our social and political conditions. Our societies are more and more alienated by the universal values, heterogeneous and particular. Racism, xenophobia, violence substitute principles.



something that created concepts. He taught that the enunciative and aesthetic creation root destroy everything that can be dominated by the programming of capitalistic system values. He taught that the only way to “resist” is being in a “guerrilla”, and the aesthetic practice is one of these creative possibilities to avoid the removal.

Up to now, homologated ideas invaded our lives. Publicity and malls impose the common taste, are habit-forming to be able to organize our lives. Deluze, through his creative thought, turned philosophy into

www.martux.it

www.kinotek.org

www.persistencebit.com

Limiteazero, Infinite Limits

Marco Mancuso



Digicult got the opportunity to interview Limiteazero at their beginnings in March 2005. That is to say long ago. At that time, Tiziana Gemin wrote a pretty complete article about Paolo Rigamonti and Silvio Mondino, the two Milanese designers and architects composing Limiteazero.

That was a starting point for those who didn't know Limiteazero's productions and activity: <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=120>. The objective of this following lines is to take up the thread of what we were saying.

Let's consider the rocketing developments in communication and multimedia art (two more and more interweaved fields, despite my purist taste). We can't also forget the

increasing path and the international renown got by Limiteazero. I witnessed all their progress as I am a friend of them. So, I thought it was highly time to have a talk with Paolo and Silvio, trying to focus the subjects of our conversation on a couple of keywords characterising their wide range of projects. And more precisely: new professionalisms, interaction and relationship among space, city communication and hyper-architecture. Laptop orchestra represented with its rapt simpleness the short-circuit for a new possible commission-production system connecting enlightened private clients to the professional artist. The last aim is the creation of a value-object able to satisfy language needs and hybrid aesthetics having the same dignity in a trade stand (Smau 2005), as well as in a gallery (the Hublab in Milan and the Mediaruimte in Brussels). It's maybe with the series Aspesi Shop, with bb_write for Blackberry and more recently the Reddot project that made Limiteazero the most important multimedia design studio in Italy. Obviously this twosome is more famous and valorised outside their homeland rather than inside the tight-mesh net of the little and poor

Italy .

They're trying to create an hybrid with the tradition (almost uniquely Italian, not to say deriving from the Politecnico di Milano University, the largest technical university in Italy) with digital languages, establishing a bridge between the historical continuity and modernity, passing through experimentations midway between art and communication and design. They're making compromises with private customers (because of the lack of aware institutions), but always remaining coherent to their principles. All their work brought them twice at the Wired Festival in NY and LA, at the Cantor Art Museum in Palo Alto , in USA , on request of Google. They also took part to the Milano Made in Design in Shanghai and Beijing. Not only. They got the opportunity to collaborate with prominent studios such as Tomato in London , Lab[au] in Brussels and Antonio Citterio & Partners in Italy .



As I wrote for the catalogue of their personal exposition in the Hublab gallery in Milan " Each of their new works firstly distinguishes itself for its beautiful design. Yes, beautiful, pretty for sight, smart in shape, reflecting years of design studies and work in this field as well as in architecture. And this is perhaps one of the elements characterising them, i.e. their digital signature. Moreover, Limiteazero don't find interesting the code flux in itself, but rather the dynamics and interactions that it establishes, the virtual world that it seems able to make real, just for a second. The circuitable-random value inside a code is not so important for the observation of random as aesthetic distinguishing mark of a machine. On the contrary it is an instrument on hand of the artist who can trigger a chain of black-outs in an apparently perfect binary system. An installation inserted in an environment is not only the excuse for setting up a dialogue between man and machine and watching the reactions in space, but it becomes an object of survey for the physical concretization of an electronics, and therefore immaterial, process. It is the core element of each designer of interfaces, author of rational screens for the sensorial (and consequently more direct) interpretation of works."

These features are still present in Limiteazero's further production. They

are skilful in showing a refined and unforgettable image for their minimal rarefied aesthetics: how couldn't you appreciate the works a_mirror or 5 pezzi cinetici? And how is it possible to ignore the sophistication of the relationship between interaction and (real and virtual) space, work and public, the elegance of an uncommon interaction, played according the codes of an emotional spontaneousness.

Paolo Rigamonti and Silvio Mondino impressed me for their intelligence in understanding limits and potentialities of the (concrete and electronics) instruments at their hands. Their approach is for sure very far from the typical techno-enthusiasm, this latter reminding me the scene of the sellers out of the temple in the Holy Bible. They're aware of the huge amount of opportunities offered by digital media in the possible developments in the body-space relationship and in the new fields of the multimedia urban architecture. Not only. They also know the possible content limitations, especially in the visualization of information landscapes of the modern metropolises. The Limiteazero showed also here (just have a look at their work for the project of hyper-architecture commissioned by Lab[Au], Spectraum-Dexia Tower in Brussels) an appreciable aesthetics and planning balance, proposing an

"alive", "sensitive" light and sound system able to establish a close relationship with places, spaces and people...



Marco Mancuso: I'd like to make this interview a bridge for the description of Limiteazero's activity as designers and artists. Your production saw you in the last years characters of the so called new digital art scene in Italy (especially in software art or interaction). Despite this situation, today you could say that you're playing a wider and multi-sided role. I mean that you can feel you are in front of an absolutely conscious cross between an artist, a designer and expert able to tailor their own activity to different situations and clients. How much do you feel as yours this metamorphosis of artist-expert? how much does it derive from your professional background and how much was it planned?

Limiteazero: We could say that we

have shown our natural vocation towards hybrid forms since the beginnings. Yet 10 years ago, when we established Limiteazero, we had in mind a project based on the crisscrossing between professionalism and different languages, as we felt somehow yet it dealt with a necessity for a system, rather than being a real choice. This system was starting to request wider and more complex planning models. Our ambition, if we can call it so, has always been the attempt to hybridize the planning tradition with new media languages. Meanwhile we are also trying to keep

a philological continuity, a hypothesis of development able to link the historical line to contemporaneity. I can't say if we are succeeding, yet when we are told that our works do show a clear sign of the Italian design school, when even the tradition of the Politecnico di Milano University, we do feel that something must have worked.

This methodology reflects upon a professional activity directly proceeding with the experimental track, or better, upon an experiment path becoming a commercial product, an offer of facilities.

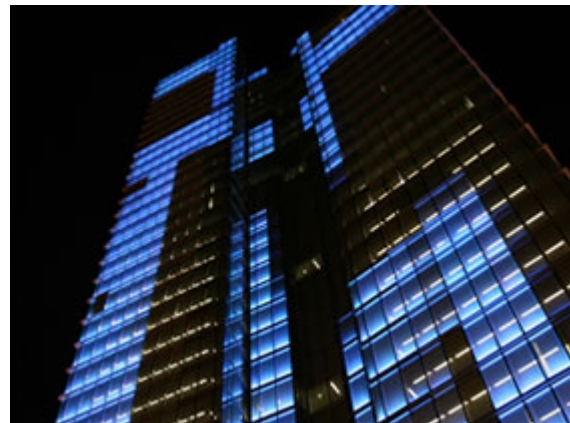


Actually we have never had the request of making art. Rather, we do think we are looting art languages, we try to get some aspects and linguistic codes, translating them in other shapes and blending them with working models, playing with some ambiguities of the communication world. In the last years we set up some important collaborations, for instance with Tomato in London or with the studio Antonio Citterio & Partners. That let us think up new methodologies and face other working approaches, enriching our skills and drawing new interventions sceneries.

Today Limiteazero can be defined as a design studio offering its professional skills to clients/partners in search for an unusual work, not conforming to communication traditional logics, but, at the same time, aware of being able to speak the same language of precise market shares, susceptible to certain codes and pushes. In the meantime it

represents a places of ideas circulation and experimentation belonging to a network of contacts and international exchanges, where non commissioned research projects are realized. And they constitute the main frame of the system we are offering.

We could say we're the exponents of a profession 2.0, a new working model where experimentation, art practice and professionalism crisscross in a spread social network. Here the final result of each work (that is represented by a point) is the sum of the contributions given by more subjects.



Marco Mancuso: In my opinion the last project and collaboration representing a very important international acknowledgement is the *Spectr|a|um/Dexia Tower* on request of the collective group Lab[au] in Brussels . Now, I'd like to know how was the work on such a project of

media architecture. Rather than the explanation of the technical work, I'm more interested in knowing how was your approach towards the city context, as your project would have a prominent impact on the city landscape

Limiteazero: spectr|a|um has been an interesting work experience on a new scale of effects. Indeed, the success, but also the difficulty of this intervention, consisted in the total freedom in approach, as there weren't precise contents to express nor strategic targets to be reached. In comparison to Holger Lippman and Olaf Bender, who have been working on magnificent video sequences, we did prefer to opt for a generative software able to give an "alive" process, a real time happening. This was the most interesting aspect to us: using a big city object as screen of a real time process.

The Dexia Tower represents an extraordinary building in a city context with a limited vertical development, as Brussels . And then the tower is still more important as it can be seen by all the hills where Brussels stretches over. We wanted to work on this idea of city lighthouse, we'd like to cast a light sign non necessarily appealing for sight, but constituting a real event, exploiting its visibility from different points in the city. The simple shapes we realized

were focussed on distance perception and had the aim not to reveal the massive body of the building and rather to set an abstract light system immersed in space.



Marco Mancuso: According to you, the growing phenomenon of multimedia architecture, the so-called media-facades, that is the opportunity to modify the urban landscape, can establish a new form of data visualization characterising the modern metropolises? Do you think it will be a new kind of hyper-mediated communication that artists and architects like you can use?

Limiteazero: The more and more use of visualization technologies is changing everything, included the whole city, into a potential screen. I do think that beyond the rapt contemplation of the luminous spectacle, the phenomenon should make you consider about the real quality values of the possible

contents. The wider and wider disposal of technology makes us think it is in inverse proportion to the quality of the proposed content, as we have been taught by the history of media. It must be the crisis of interesting subjects to be at the basis of the identity (and cultural) crisis of the multimedia city. Is there a person who can remember just one fragment of interesting content after visiting Times Square ?

Paul Virilio asserts that information is architecture fourth dimension and for sure this component constitutes one of the key-elements for the city development in the next years. Therefore the work on information inside the urban landscape is certainly a prominent subject, but it is necessary to pay attention to the consequences of an unwise and above all senseless media disfigurement as you can sadly see in some places.

To sum up, technology offers us powerful instruments, but it is not the high time for understanding the things it can spread. Until advertising videos, lightened company logos or news tickers will be used, understanding won't be particularly difficult. We could say that at the moment the language of this "amplified multi-mediality" is still a tough dialect. Yet, the improvement and development of an articulate

language are something different and this is the path we should go along.



Marco Mancuso: In your opinion, which is the difference between this kind of multi-media architecture and the production of architects using new technologies such as Nox, Ito, Spuybroek, Libeskind, Hadid and others (in this regard we suggest Gianluca Milesi's exposition for Mixed Media 2006)? Which one of this two different trends, if we can say so, do you prefer, also taking into consideration the Italian tradition one of the main features of your education- of your project?

Limiteazero: Among the cited architects we'd say that only Lars Spuybroek, and not always, has used new technologies in his production. Otherwise it would be better to say that the contemporaneous languages, strongly influenced by the new media's dynamics, are part of the vocabulary of a certain modern

architecture. Generally speaking we'd say that communication languages (that are the contemporaneous sign system shared worldwide) have become a kind of aesthetics Esperanto indiscriminately used by architecture, design, art, fashion and media.

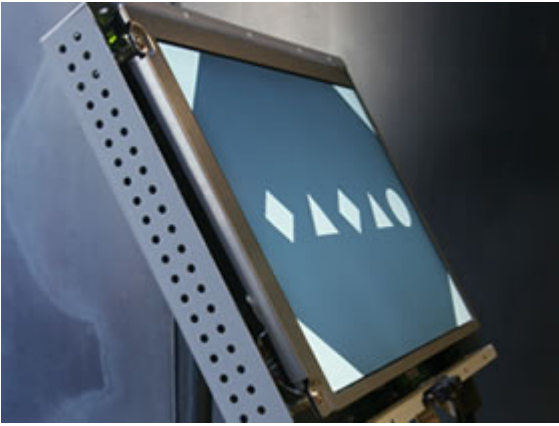
We can say that some formal solutions offered by architecture were possible thanks to a renewal in the aesthetic language brought by new media. Yet this phenomenon seems to be commonly accepted to confine it to some aspects of the shaping research. These aspects have hugely increased thanks to the progresses made by shaping and representation instruments. So architecture has become a communication phenomenon, the main character of the event civilization, stepping in the media world.



Media-architecture is a tactic for artificially adding a reading level, i.e. information, to architecture complexity. Yet, it often turns into a simple transformation from the building surface into a screen. This is a surely interesting path on the linguistic point of view and other experiments in this sense are most welcome- but it doesn't answer to questions that are nowadays very important as it lacks of a reference point with civilization and the traditional line from the city era.

On the contrary this architecture project changes according to the use of new technologies, used firstly as instruments and then as methods and languages. Some kind of architecture is no more planned through the old representational models, i.e. they are no more abstract representation of plans and cutaways, but it is shown by the storytelling, becoming a plastic process, virtual shaping, rendering and representation making it a self-sufficient product, sometimes also independently from its real transposition in handmade object.

The point is not our position because we're part of this cultural society. It is rather a question of boasting the research in order to point out new application areas for new technologies.



Marco Mancuso: On the whole, if we analyse your latest projects as for instance *Reddot* or *Alberto Aspesi Shops*, what is your position towards the concept of space and how has your interacting design developed, in comparison to the everyday relationship to space, maybe linked to normal life and working activities (a shop window, a company's entrance), depending from people spontaneously living them. So, which is your relationship between "space" and human beings" and which the directions you could take in this sense?

Limiteazero: Both the projects you're talking about, despite their difference, have a common element that is a constant of our work when it comes in touch with our idea of interaction. According to us interaction is always mean as a side effect and above all elementary element. It deals with reactive objects, rather than interactive. Both the projects do not

need a particular attention for the relationship modalities changing as they enter in contact with people. They simply recognize your presence and react. They don't reveal a content, don't play with you, don't tell a story. Just react, exactly with the same banality as the bank door or the automated gate opening before you.

While the object drawn for Aspesi Shops are meant to be electronic watches and are present in the shop window to exhibit contents, Reddot is thought to be an object integrating in the same architectonic building. It's an heavy object with its own definite shape and body, and it is thought to be present also when it is turn off. It doesn't work only in the space where inserted, but it tries to interact with the materials delimiting that space. It tries to be welcome speaking a common language.

Reddot works in an interesting way, above all about its identity of object and about the game on materials mechanically mirroring light on different materials. This item was born in a context of close collaboration and tuning with our client (Nice) who has trusted us in working on a experimental project linking the realization of a peculiar project with their working and representation space. Beyond our research, we do believe that just our relationship with "enlightened" and brave clients is an

elementary point for the realization of this kind of experimentations set in spaces related to working, commercial or productive aims. All them represent the mile stone for the next developments of our activity.



Marco Mancuso: A time Manuel of the Lab[au] asserted in a certain way that studios like yours, theirs and few others' in the world will represent in the next future the best mediators for those who will want to develop projects mid way between art and communication. In few words the technical skills, the aesthetical taste, tradition in design and urban architecture and last, but not least, the skill in working both with sound and imagines will make you the best mediators for a wide-ranging multimedia project. Do you agree? Is it the professional objective of Limiteazero?

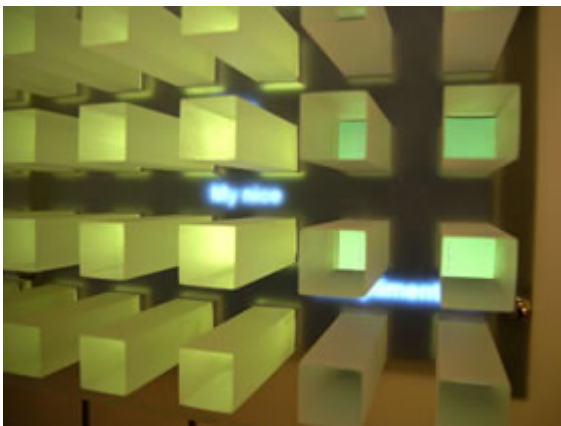
Limiteazero: As for each stage of technological and language change,

there are always experimental avant-gardes, appreciated and shared just by a tiny elite. They track some research directions and it's because of the innovation they're bringing and showing that they are successful. Then, inevitably, languages undergo maturation and come in touch with the quantity and quality of public. So they give birth to more common systems and to more industrialised processes. People who, like us, have years of experience in the field of cross among languages, professionalism and technologies, have got for sure a deep knowledge of these instruments and they're able to manage complex multimedia processes. Yet, it is always true that there're just few things like multimedia being ambiguous and so widely reproducible.

We believe that the destiny of most of us is to be icebreaker. We're travelling in difficult seas, our winds being curiousness and passion, we're facing the difficulty of bearing a speedy rhythm in upgrading and fitting instrument we use everyday. This has, on the other side, human endurance as cons. As soon as this can be bearable for little groups of people, it will mean that the market is not yet ready to absorb this offer. As soon as these languages and opportunities will enter in the common cultural heritage, then over a short time span middle-size trade company will be set

up (of course swallowed up by communication multinationals). And this will happen also exploiting our present experiences as reference point.

Therefore we do think that characters like us will probably always be linked to very few, but faithful and particular clients. We're going to work with experimental frames and so we would necessarily and continuously upgrade our working models, suiting to changes.



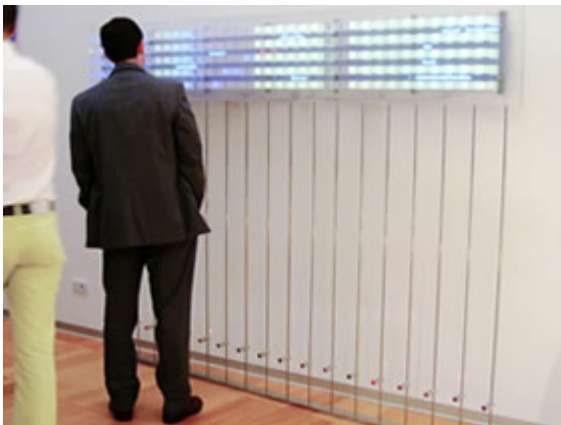
Marco Mancuso: What about the work in Italy for studios like Limiteazero? Despite my influence, I'd like you to think up pros and cons in working in a country like the nowadays Italy . How much importance had the Mixed Media Festival in Milan , born and died after a single edition and seeing you Paolo, as inventor and first promoter?

Limiteazero: Let's say Italy showed to be a very receptive market as for technological products. Yet, this

seems to be in an inverse proportion to technological innovations, above all to integrate technology inside the cultural tradition. We buy and use it, but not elaborate. Just have a look at the Italian web situation: here you find an apparently comforting percentage of people connected on the net, but on the other hand the Italian web quality both for contents and shape-is, on the whole, highly embarrassing. On the cultural point of view, we can't say there are not texts of a certain quality as well as prestigious festival linked to science, philosophy or literature do play an excellent role as pedagogical and upgrading means, perfectly tuning with the cultural tradition of this country.

We cannot forget realities such as the Studio di Fonologia Musicale (a music school in Milan) founded by RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana, Italian public broadcasting) with Maderna and Berio, main characters of the European electrical sound experimentation from the 50s till the 70s, or, in the same years, the GruppoT with Giovanni Anceschi, Gianni Colombo and Gabriele De Vecchi, working on the programmed art and creating wonderful wrap-around and interactive settings. They were most beloved outside Italy rather than here. It seems that our country isolates in an aristocratic self-love for its history, what instead is a narrowed-minded and self-damaging

decaying provinciality.



To be honest it's up to the different Italian cities, but for sure Milan is strongly competing for being the first in the worst list. I think it's enough to have a look at the cultural offer, even only in the last 5 years, proposed by Milan , Rome and Turin . In this comparison you can make some simple considerations. Our experience goes deep in this context, suffering for lack of interlocutors and above all structures, institutions or every kind of receptive systems. Our work is more known and appreciated abroad. We chose long ago English as main language of our site, considering that the majority of the visits (the 80%) is due to non-Italian speakers. We have been as well invited to show our projects in very prominent contexts in foreign countries. In Italy instead we have to warmly thank only willing privates who have managed to organise shows where we took part in

spite of all difficulties.

It is also true that a certain lack in interest is due to several lacks, starting from the small amount of people for a possible electronic Italian scene. We are very few to work in this field .But also the quality of the work is not so much . This provokes a lack in interest in investors and probably isn't worth for disturbing complicated institutions who are already in difficulty for most important subjects.

The experience of the Mixed Media Festival is both deeply tied to this dry context and to the lack or inadequacy of its own format, beyond the inevitable inexperience of the organizers. In order to be the most clear as possible the festival ended up to speak several and not always understandable languages and so it couldn't convey the message as it was intended. This concerns self-critics, what we find often ignored, while absolutely important to us. Of course the relationship with institutions wasn't an aid, not in terms of simple promotion nor of concrete help. It seems public institutions are concerned in boasting often useless initiatives, but for sure related to power. Not to speak of private sponsors, who often mistook us and the objectives of our event for obtaining a first-line seat as they were in informatics fairs or in promotional stands.



foto by Arianna D'Angelica

We'd say everything goes as we above mentioned: rejection in adequate

power levels (that represents the first element to become someone in Italy , what we knew but have naively undervalued) lacking if not absent sensitiveness for this subject and common indifference towards the inside potentialities of our project by side of the institutions. Perhaps this is a mistake, but we believe that in a city different from Milan we could have a chance. That's all.

www.limiteazero.net/

Tafkav And A Flower Called Vanda

Teresa De Feo



Communication between different entities, in an age of deep anthropologic changes, is the topic on which the complex research of TAFKAV , “The Artist Formerly Kwon As Vanda” , develops. That is a fully Italian installation which brilliantly deals with uncertain and controversial questions that still have to be discussed, thus succeeding in giving a glimpse on digital arts’ next future and more.

The installation is a cage containing a flower with purplish nuances and a solemn appearance, whose galvanometric variations are measured by a psycho-galvanometre which sends the data it gathers to a computer able to turn them into musical sounds. Presented at the Body-Process Art Festival AMBER’ 07 in Instabul, TAFKAV is an

experimental laboratory set up to analyze the methodological possibilities for art, science, technology and nature (technoethic) to interlink and a demonstration that those links are necessary, possible and effective. The installation should not be considered just an actual object working according to set mechanisms; indeed, it implies a process of conceptual research (the theoretic considerations can be read in a paper available to anyone who would like to read it) which precedes, follows and gathers both the theoretic questions and the results the machine gradually helps to obtain about the nature of communication a human being can develop with another world par excellence: plants.

TAFKAV is the result of a long work of research and study carried out by one of the most eclectic supporters of digital thought and aesthetics among Italian scholars: Francesco Monico, who directs the Media Design School of the New School of Fine Arts in Milan. Currently he works as a Ph.D researcher at Plymouth University where he studies Syncretic Arts. We interviewed him. The work is complex and needs attention, but, believe me,

it is really worthwhile. Let's start.



Teresa de Feo: You presented TAFKAV as “a work on the communication between different worlds in an age of deep anthropologic change, which proves human beings urgently needs new and original interpretations of themselves. What do you mean by that?

Francesco Monico: The main subject of the work is the pragmatic of communication and the end of the humanistic paradigm according to which human beings were the centre of nature, where nature meant the world. In an age when cybernation has given us moist technologies, hybrid chips where the dry silica meets the wet biological material, we have started to understand that biological living entities have their own languages, cultures and feelings and our relation with them has to be connected by a cultural negotiation which goes beyond the ordinary

human boundaries. In short, it will be necessary for mankind to go beyond humanism towards a new approach to nature and technology.

Teresa de Feo: As far as we can examine, TAFKAV is a complex work that builds its contents through the intersection of two levels: an aesthetic level and a theoretic-conceptual one which follows scientific methods (paper available for users). So, the machine represents the possibility to create, verify or refute heuristically what is written in the paper which, in turn, changes every time new results are obtained by the machine. Does that mean creative methods and the role of the artists themselves are changing?

Francesco Monico: My work is more than just the installation and the theory behind it: since it is “research art”, I conceived it as a real research based on theories which are verified through a pragmatic “experimentum”. The work has a scientific side and the paper follows the rules of scientific publications both from a formal and from a substantial point of view. So theoretic research and artistic research are inseparably linked together. Through that point of view the artist is like a researcher who goes beyond commonly recognized aesthetics and, more generally, cultural rules, to reach the boundary of knowledge and new

human sensory experience.



Teresa de Feo: What is the relation between concepts and “laboratory experimentation”, between “paper” and “machine”?

Francesco Monico: The relation is the same as between metaphysics and pragmatics. The paper presents the assumptions and the operational background (metaphysics); but in order for the hermeneutic relation started by the communication of the plant expressed through music (pragmatics) to work, we have to consider the plant an ethical subject. To do that, we need to take the paper and read the story of a certain kind of ecology and of a famous American sentence according to which the trees of a wood were recognized the damaged part in a process and so identified as individuals with both a *telos* and an *ethos*, thus with their own rights.

Many colleagues of mine argue that the operation towards biological or technological diversity is not sustainable as long as the majority of people live in almost desperate conditions. That is understandable, but let's not forget that many times in history a part of mankind started worrying about the identity of subjects who then were not considered human, such as native populations or African people. Well, at that time those western people who fought for their fair rights were accused of causing famines which had been provoked by Western people themselves. Today the approach towards technology and biology reality is similar. In the centre there is life, which is information production.



Teresa de Feo: In short, what's the meaning of the project?

Francesco Monico: The project is meant to build a technoethic installation based on a metaphysic

artistic process that creates ideas and concepts and a pragmatic one that defines experiences; the dialectic that the process creates is an experimentum.

Teresa de Feo: What do you mean by tech-noetics?

Francesco Monico: The term is a mix between *tecné* and *noetikos* : Technoethic is the speculation about the impact technology has on consciousness processes. Technology can be telematic, digital, genetic, organic, moist, linguistic. Currently available technologies influence

consciousness and have turned into third millennium art substrate: particularly the most interesting technologies are those mixing telematics, biotechnology, nanotechnology and inform the process of artists, designers, performers, architects. The aesthetic definition of the above-mentioned contemporary technological paradigm will be tech-noethics, that is to say the fusion of what we know and can investigate further about consciousness (noetikos) with what we can do and create through technology.



according to the commands of a computer checking the plant's vital parameters. The whole technical device can be created thanks to the cooperation of two great experts, Massimo Banzi, who dealt with the construction of the psychogalvanometre, while Steve Piccolo dealt with the creation of every single note, noise and sound with which Vanda communicates.

Teresa de Feo: Can you tell us how the installation actually works? What happens to Vanda (the beautiful flower is a *vanda cerulea* orchid)?

Teresa de Feo: Has TAFKAV already gained actual results in your research?

Francesco Monico: The orchid is connected through sensors to a psychogalvanometre, a device measuring body galvatometric electricity (which is very slow); the psychogalvanometre in turn is connected to Arduino, which turns electric impulses into Max Msp, which finds sounds in a computer ram which amplifies sounds' sequence and transmits them through loudspeakers. There is then the Life support system: the plant is suspended in a structure where there is a 400 watt sodium lamp and a water niking system including an underlying tray in which the water is gathered and which activates

Francesco Monico: Yes, sure, just read the paper .



We suggest that you should take a look at it.

<http://tafkav.blogspot.com/>

Andrea Marutti: Italian Experimental Underground

Bertram Niessen



Digimag readers are probably bored by my long prologues on the reasons why I chose to interview someone. I'm unfortunately convinced, and I'm getting more and more into those convictions, that explaining the reasons behind articles is definitely one of the most important part of the article itself.

Well, Some weeks ago I was at Torkiera in Milan (for those who missed it, Torkiera is one of the few spaces of the metropolis that is seriously promoting musical experimentation, among all its proposals). I was resonating with Marco Mancuso about potential interviews. Suddenly, I saw the table of Afe Records and I asked myself: "Is it possible that we haven't

interviewed Andrea Marutti yet, one of the most interesting key character of the experimental underground of the last ten years?". Yep, it is possible. So here I apology and remediate.

Andrea Marutti, aka The Afeman, Amon, Never Known, Lips Vago and tons of other names, is a musician that dedicated his time to that gloomy and not-defined genre the dark-ambient is, moving into other territories with his multiple collaborations. And he's obviously Afe Records man, little but well known cult label that devote efforts to "braking down the barriers in electronic music since 1995 .

Synthesizing the complex panorama on which he works in a little introduction is tough work, so read the interview here above.



Bertram Niessen: It is quite clear that Afe Records has a clear and precise editorial line, even if it goes from pop musicians such as Bugo to extreme ones such as Maurizio Bianchi. It is hard to say what is really interesting and what is not in some of the genres you deal with. How do you choose what to publish?

Andrea Marutti: Well, first of all, I don't want to be the one that enjoy someone else famousness, so I have to make a precision. Bugo "officially" participated with his name in Afe only to a remix project of my alter ego Wolkspurz & Ramirez, realizing his version. He appeared also in an album with an "alcoholic" improvisation with Rico of Uochi Toki, but I'm far away from saying that Bugo published an album with Afe! Talking about Maurizio Bianchi, things are dirrefent. 'Zen Tage (Touka)', his first album realized with German Telepherique, has been an important work because its first publication matched with a collaboration with an artist that has already been working for twenty years. Actually, it also was the first CD published by Afe "all alone", without any other famous label support.

Next publications of Afe will include Maurizio again, this time realizing an album with the Israeli Maor Appelbaum. Focusing better the

question contents, I think you got a nuance that is not so easy to understand, for those not into modalities and practices of label management. Sometime, in experimental music, the bound between a quality work and something gross is subtle. I also got some trouble rating some albums that I hence decided to to publish. Luckily my doubts faded when they smashed the public and the critic as well. It also happened that sometime albums that I considered little masterpieces didn't satisfy the rest of the world... Taste is my only rule to publish albums, however the fact of being easily sellable is sometime necessary to balance the income account. Even so, I can proudly say I never published anything I disliked, sellable or not.



Bertram Niessen: As those into "noisy" circles, the italian experimental music panorama is fresh and alive. At the same time, it seems like there's no real "scenes"... Why is it this way? Is it

something typical of Italy or is it the same abroad?

Andrea Marutti: I'm not a "noise" fan, when it's not intubated into complex structures and arranged with canons that give it an adult development and identity. I'd rather tend not to put "experimental" and "noisy" together, as it is too simple to say you experiment only making some noise without sense... I don't think I got elements enough to say in Italy there are some scenes linked to experimental electronic music. In magazines and websites, new scenes seem to appear every day. I could be wrong, but I think this helps the creation of new trends and nothing else. Obviously in our country as well as everywhere else in the world, people with the same musical interests organize happenings, collaborations, etc...

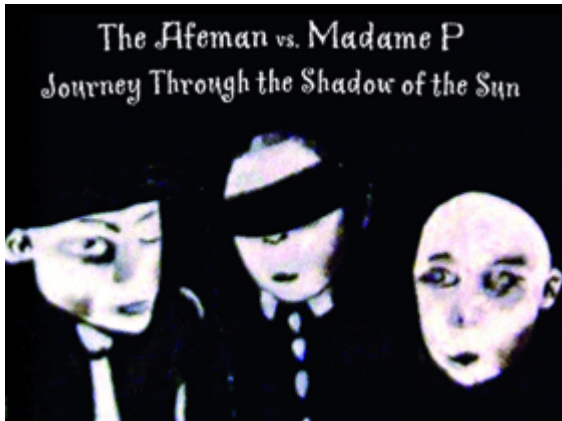
Bertram Niessen: ndrea Marutti, The Afeman, Amon, Never Known, Lips Vago... All of your projects outed with different names. Do you have an "umbrella" project that covers all the others, or are all independent identities?

Andrea Marutti: Well, actually you didn't mentioned all the names. The umbrella you're talking about it's nothing but myself and the desire to express in different music areas, using different instruments and manners.

Frequenting different genres and having different pseudonyms made the alias affirm rather than the single identity behind them. So, during the decade, the success of Amon in the Dark-Ambient area made me identify with it. Some called me with that name rather than my real one. The affirmation of Afe during last years slowly transposed the identification/symbiosis to my label and myself.

I auto-called myself "The Afeman", my fault, and I lost the control on the situation. The most who met me during last four/five year knew me as "The Afeman". So we could say that "the public" - and not only - never knew me as Andrea Marutti... I started publishing stuff with my own name. Now, to recover my identity - musically, online and in my everyday life - I'm trying to use other tactics as well, because I'm kind of bored of being identified with all my (old) nicknames. It will soon be released an album under my name for a big sector label, and this could help the object I'm directed. I say, I blame myself for the situation, but it's never too late to adjust the target. I hope the public won't take this as a way to put on airs, to be up on oneself. Amon, Afeman or everything else do not change the substance and I'm still the same person no matter what my name is, but as I already feel to have too many weak point in my life, I would simply

like being called with anything but my name.



Bertram Niessen: Talking about your music projects, how hard is staging around for those into niche music? Or maybe I should ask if this is a problem for you...

Andrea Marutti: I never really questioned myself about that, in the sense that I always preferred the studio activity, that is more congenial to me. But I never said no to such requests. So all of my lives since 1997 have always been the result of external inputs, accompanied - at least the first times - by my curiosity to measure with live context, to hear how studio compositions could have sound. Once the initial boost ended, I started getting bored and above all considering concerts a straining. I almost abandoned this type of activities.

Since 2005 anyway, I develop a new set based on improvisation that

allowed me to find new stimulus, turning my mind again to live set. If particular economic and technical exigencies are requested, I think it is easy to find places where own live-sets can be proposed, even for those into experimental music and research. Unfortunately the majority of available locations have no support or bad acoustic. Moreover, concerts are often heard by habitués and not people who are interested to the performance itself. There's no worse show than the one executed in front of a chatting public, totally disinterested to the musical proposal. When I'm living this kind of situation, I express my discomfort turning the volume up and saturating the high frequencies. If I'm in charge of the mixer, I win. But, as it wouldn't be the reason why I'm there, this couldn't do anything but create sadness and suggest me not to propose such kind of situations. Obviously, till the next time.

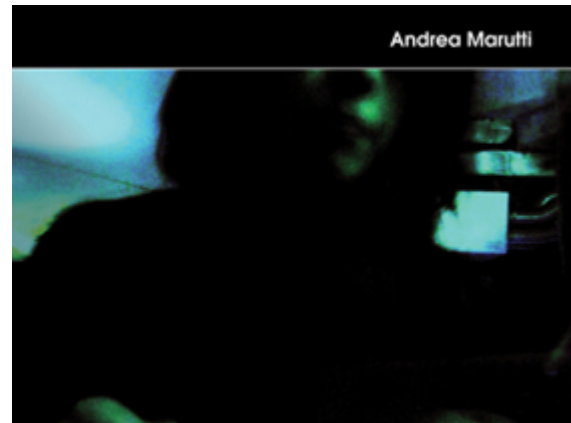


Bertram Niessen: Anyway, the thing I always found interesting is that interesting music is played in particular places. Is there any location that stroke you more than the other?

Andrea Marutti: For sure! Because of my last answer, people could think I only played in bars, and this is largely inexact. In July 1997 I had the opportunity to participate to a festival in Bologna inside the exhibition stands of the city. The stage was built in a square inside two high towers projected by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. The prominence of the buildings made the experience unique. Last summer, I played in Arichiaro, a little village near Catanzaro, inside an agriculture territory converted into museum/artistic space by his owner, my friend Tommaso Cosco, great listener of “alternative” music and “spiritual farmer”.

Playing in the middle of nature, listening to my music spreading harmoniously between hills and valleys, as well as among the public seated around olive trees, has been one of the best satisfactions. I remember with pleasure the night held in 2004 at Lab12 in Vigevano, which has been for years the home of my friend Patrizia/Madame P. I had been staging for some time and for that occasion Lab was crowded as never, with some people I hadn't meet

for ages as well as friends from afar only for my live-set. A fantastic concert and a period that I remember with nostalgia.



Bertram Niessen: How do you work on your music? Do you start from a concept or are you more interested in improvisation?

Andrea Marutti: Things never happen the same way. Sometime you have an idea and realizing it brings success. Or maybe the attempt remain an attempt but creates conditions for something else. There are periods that I work on sounds and I create a sort of library. Then I go back to them and try to create a structure that can valorize and complete them. During the last years I realized some stuff taking parts of my concerts, not modifying the original contents and using them as base for more complete songs. A part from experiments with different recorders, once my music- rhythmic or not- was organized with a

sequencer and was based managed with synthesizers. During the year, I started using a couple of samplers, but I almost abandoned the MIDI.

Now, I prefer working with audio software. I use several analogical outboards, effects and pedals, but I do not dislike the use of dedicated plug-ins near the instrumentation I own, integrating the project with field recordings and “poor” electronic. I missed the comparison with other musicians, excepts for some remixes or “performance of services”. I then realized my ambitions collaborating with Giuseppe Verticchio/Nimh for “Hall of Mirrors”, with Andrea “ics” Ferraris (Ur, Aichamber3 and lots more) in “Sil Muir” and, recently, with Davide Del Col (Ornament, Echran) in our creature “Molnija Aura”. These collaborations brought me to know and experiment composition methods and expressive modalities, enriching the number of sound solutions I can use.

Bertram Niessen: One last question about Afe Pins, a sort of mania in Milan (not fashion, I think coolness has nothing to do with it). How is it going? How do you choose your subjects? How is your relationship with people coming at your table?

Andrea Marutti: Well, I hope this mania will grow and spread as much as it can... I'd say it's going well. I

always loved pins, since I was a child, I wore them even if I didn't know their subjects. Some years ago I decided to start the production of some Afe pins as promotional gadgets, after which I created the conditions to make them on my own, following the natural instinct that brings me to be independent in realize what I need. So I bought the necessary and I began. Tables set during concerts attracted public attention and, more than single pins, I received requests to realize hundreds of pieces for bands, labels, etc.



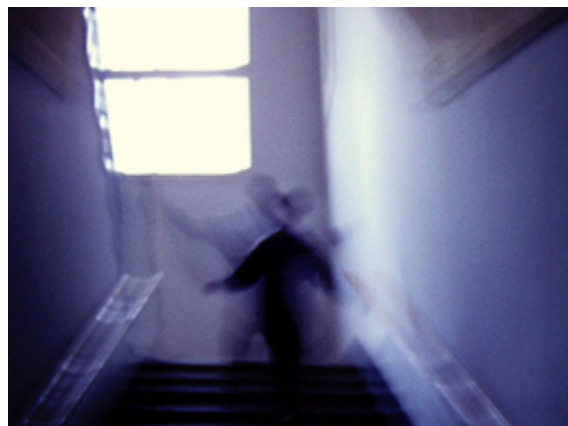
I consider Afe Pins as an entity completely separated from Afe Records, and the approach I use is different for both of them. Pins is an occupation I consider as a real job, in the sense that it is an impersonal activity where I'm not so emotively involved as I am in the label. What I want to say is that I can realize a band pin even if I do not like its logo, while I'd never publish an album if I dislike

it. The label is an activity for myself, because it makes me feel better. Pins are an important voice in the blank for my own economy. I enjoy bringing Afe table in situations available to host it. The best thing is the relation created with people visiting our tables. Pins give infinite conversation arguments, turning the job into a pleasure. The majority of the proposed subjects are in fact suggested by people who visited the table. Parameters on which I realize pins are for example requests from the public or my interests, that sometimes make me create absurd pins or even worse

Bertram Niessen: Ask yourself anything you want, if you want..

Andrea Marutti: Ow, here's the part where "Ask yourself a question and answer"! Well, as we're at the end of the interview, I'd say a classic "What is brewing?" or "What are your future projects?". And this would be my answer: I've been preparing next Afe publications that will be ready for October 2008. There may be some albums that will be out some months ago, but I'm not sure about that. During last years, the number of label publications has surely grown, from 6 of 2004 to 24 of 2007. I think it is impossible to do more than that, I think it's even too much. I think next year I'll try to reduce the quantity of productions, as I think I reached the

top of my possibilities. In any case, among the programmed album, there surely is: an inedited album composed by John Hudak, the re-edition (with bonus tracks) named Amon vs. Mortar of tracks published on vinyl by Oktag in 2000, Maurizio Bianchi album with Maor Appelbaum, the return of Brian Lavelle and an intense collaboration between Daniele Brusaschetto and the Norwegian Origami Galaktika.



At the moment, I'm waiting to receive material from some other Italian and international artists, but nothing is decided yet. Personally, I should publish for Nextera my first album with my real name. The label from Czech republic already catalogued musicians such as Lustmord, The Hafler Trio, Clock DVA and many others. Some "aggressive" experiments are waiting publication under an American label, and I hope this will happen soon. The second chapter of the "Hall of Mirrors" project, recorded during the summer, is

waiting to find its best collocation, as well as “Utopian Suns”, the debut album of Molnija Aura, and the Sil Muir album, still without name.

I hope Sil Muir finds a house, as we already assembled lots of material that we’re still finishing. Next year a French label will publish a MiniCD-R that contains two songs mixed by the American Mike Palace/Horchata by me and Sil. My track is about fifteen minutes and was recently included in the compilation Table For Six: All Quiet?, out with the Belgian label EE

Tapes. Some other tracks will appear on a 4-way split and a compilation edited by the new label Kosmik Elk Mind. Nothing else!.

I would strongly thank you for the interview and hosting me on Digicult.

www.aferecords.com/andreamarutti/

www.aferecords.com

www.myspace.com/andreamarutti

Live!ixem, The Five Days Of Palermo

Claudia Moriniello

Live!iXem 2007



Call for contest/festival [edition IV]

I've been recording all I can see and hear and sometimes even what I cannot see for about 40 years. Many of those recordings, which include despicable, dangerous and sublime sounds, have become my music. - Alvin Curran.

Il Live!iXem, a music contest and festival of audiovisuals, mixed media and experimental electronic arts which is organized by Antitesi, is continuously changing. This year's fourth edition has been still characterized by the most advanced research in creativity.

This is the only contest in Italy, as far as typology and method are concerned, which is dedicated to all those Italian artists who use new technologies applied to the arts, particularly focusing on the relation

between sound and image. Every year the festival has moved from one place to another and changed its structure: what has not changed is the honesty with which the contest has been carried out and the carefulness with which the programme has been drawn up. After the first two editions (2004 and 2005) in Venice and the third edition between Rome and Palermo (2006), after many difficulties and inconveniences, this year the festival will be totally held in its native city: Palermo.

Live!iXem's aim is to highlight the works of those artists who use a combination of performing expressions (music, videos, dance, theatre) completing them live with digital, electronic and cinematographic audiovisual devices in order to build an active relation with their audience. Let's start though from his first step, trying to take stock of the situation.



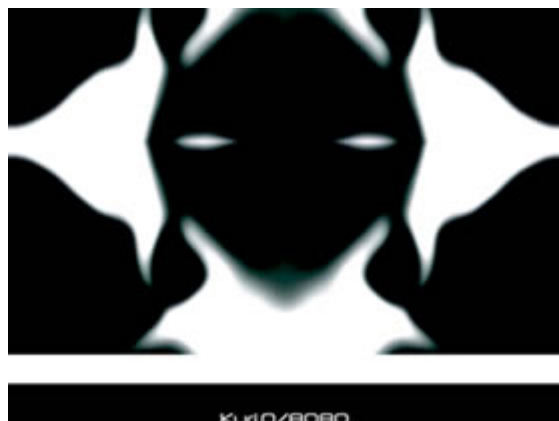
Year after year the pattern of the contest has always been particularly effective in promoting the involvement of emerging national projects and in helping their performing development.

The rules to enter the contest are based on transparency, which is a peculiar characteristic of Live!iXem. The participants have posted their submissions on iXem's podcast (<http://www.ixem.it/pages/podcastb log.htm>) and their works have been thus showed to everyone. The very participants have then become part of the jury and thus determined the result through their right to a single vote.

There are five audiovisual projects which won the contest and will become part of the award dvd produced by ANTITESI, the association which created and organizes Live!iXem: Lunar III by Alessandro Fiorin Damiani and Davide Lorenzon, Going Home band La Jovenc e Devis Venturelli, B-Light project by Headvision, Nadessja and Eniac , Ferseht(o)urm by Anna Bolena, EXEAIO - Draw 01 by Kuri.O and 8080 .

Through an experimental path, the artists shaped, built, deconstructed and interpreted sounds, images, and

performative arts, each according to their personal aesthetics.



Live!iXem's results are the proof that Italy's artistic liveliness should not fear comparisons, it is willing to hear suggestions and criticism and is open to artistic and cultural exchanges. It is through its change in shapes and structures that Live!iXem evolves and renews, playing also the role of developing social relations as well as international cultural and artistic exchanges.

To confirm the festival's aim of spreading and promoting art and culture, this year's programme lively develops through different expressions : practical-theoric laboratories, important seminar, video conferences, presentations, debates, audiovisual screenings and international live performances. The practical-theoric laboratory by Alvin Curran is an extraordinary moment which anticipates and opens

Live!ixem.

Music outside conventional performative spaces, the electroacoustic experimental composition and interdisciplinary electroacoustic improvisation are the topics that characterize Alvin Curran artistic and musical career and that will be showed and explained to the participants during the three-day laboratory.



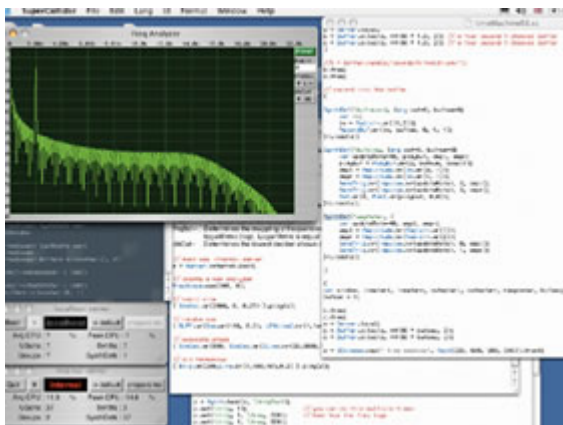
The great cultural renewal at the beginning of the twentieth century was a turning point for music, which was influenced by the artistic avant-garde of that time. Music and its writing broke their ties with the past once for all and created aesthetic concepts and techniques which led to huge possibilities in artistic and musical creation. As time has gone by, digital technologies has become very versatile and has integrated more and more with traditional instruments, thus creating new hybrid instruments

which has greatly expanded expressive possibilities. In the same way the relation with the actual and performative space has changed: not necessarily the concert hall, the performance can be held outside, where the space is open and full of “contemporary sounds”. Music, mirroring our times, has become the place for experimentation aiming at deconstructing conventional patterns which can regain contradictions and extremes.

The lab held by the musician Andrea Valle, is more connected to musical computer science. The musician , a very skilled programmer, will introduce the participants to the use of the software Super Collider .

An artistic, sociological and social interpretation to think about the current state of experimental electronic arts and their relationships with the new media and the web, looking for new scenarios of interpretation and use. All this, together with very interesting workshops and conferences open to the public in the afternoon.

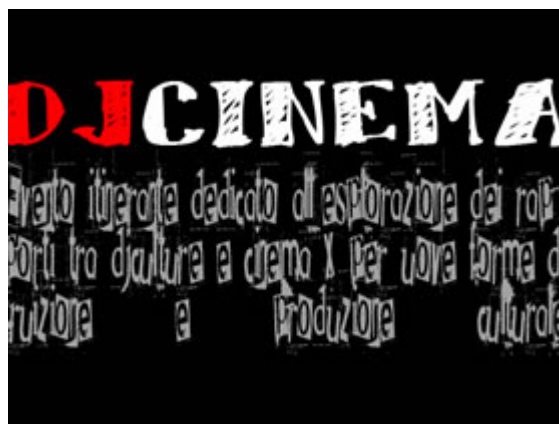
During the meeting called Geography: from signs to sound, Andrea Valle shows how the software Super Collider works through the presentation of Geography, a formal system to organize the audio material which he himself invented.



The second public workshop of the afternoon has a historical-documentary film approach in dealing with the topic of new technologies applied to the arts and the relating new social realities. It is QOOB (a multimedia project developed by Telecom Italia Broadcasting and MTV which brings television, the Internet and mobile telephones together and ISBN edizioni (publishing house belonging to Il Saggiatore group) together presenting a DVD called TECH STUFF, the first TV series about electronic music created by the young Giorgio Sancristoforo .

At the end of the workshop, it is time for Emergency to give a speech on social and cultural practical voluntary service and to present a new Emergency group practice in Palermo. Espressioni creative ed artistiche quindi, ma anche sociali , che sottolineano, nell'approccio, nella logica e nell'intento, come inscindibile sia il legame tra cultura e società .

The third workshop, called Netlabels & Creative Commons, was a videoconference during which Fabio Battistetti, Giuseppe Cordaro, Filippo Aldovini, Luca Sciarratta spoke . It was a consideration on the important subject of independent production's new frontiers.

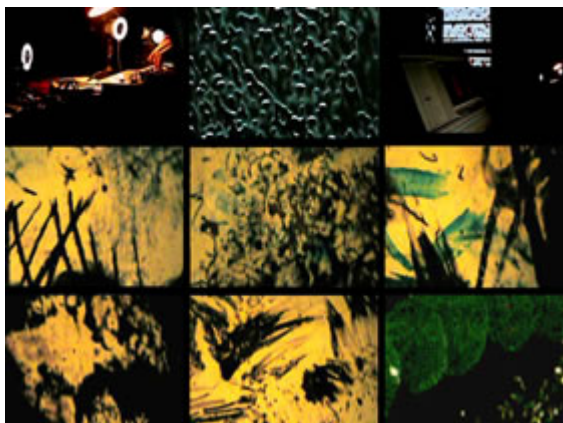


The part of the festival which was dedicated to screenings was the result of Live!iXem's cooperation with different national and international realities such as the Israeli duo Duprass with their videos Limbo Sketches e Free Fields , Digicult with the audiovisual exhibitions Visual Musik (edited by Marco Mancuso for Dissonanze 2006) and +39: Call for Italy (edited Claudia D'Alonzo for Cinematics 2007) and DJCINEMA, a project developed by Alessio Galbiati and Paola Catò which focused on the importance of the relationship between "dj culture" and the kind of cinema which aims at creating alternative forms of use and cultural

production. Their exhibition was called Zerofeedback Vol. 01 (edited by Giovanni Artigliano aka Selfish) .

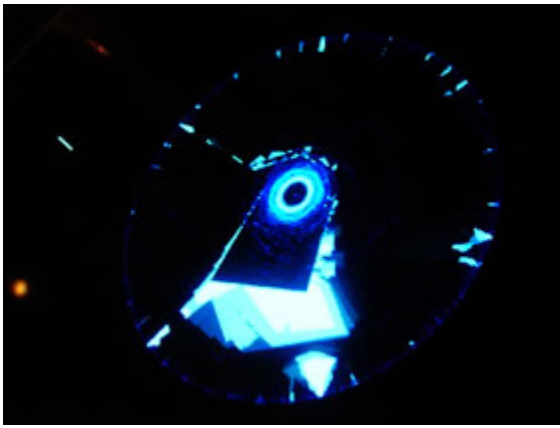
Moreover, there was Optofonica project, which was started by Tez (Maurizio Martinucci) in 2006 and is now developed in cooperation with the Optophonic foundation in Amsterdam. Optofonica is a platform showing the current state of art, and it is particularly interested in the synesthesia between different media and sound research development.

For four years Live!iXem has supported and hosted sound and audiovisual experimentation, not only giving a chance to young people and artists at their debut, but also showing famous artists who alternate on the festival stage thus promoting an exchange of ideas between national and international realities.



The live performances by the Swiss-American **Ursula Scherrer** and the **Italian musician Andrea Valle** duo will be characterized by audiovisual improvisation saranno quindi campo d'improvvisazione audiovisiva per il duo composto dalla svizzero-americana e dal musicista italiano. Anna Bolena will be performing with the work which won the Ferseht(o)urm contest . With the support of the Netherlands Embassy, Live!iXem hosts this year the prestigious project LEAMO (Loos Electro Acoustic Media Orchestra), with Peter van Bergen, Anne La Berge , Petra Dolleman and Jan bas Bollen. The group will be presenting, with different combinations, two sets of compositions for instruments, electronic and live video. The ending show, supported by the French Culture Centre of Palermo, will be the prestigious Sensors_Sonics_Sights, which will show the audience an interdisciplinary live performance mixing body and its movements with music and live videos together.

As in the past editions, the presence of foreign artists confirms Live!iXem's main aim is to favour an exchange between national and international independent experimental electronic music.



The absence of winners among Italian artists on the contrary, highlights the lack of interest and the indifference of national and local institutions, which disadvantage Italian artistic-musical scene and its development. Live!iXem is an independent and self-management production based on the sharing of purposes, approach and interests of people who spontaneously gathered in a network to develop cultural, artistic and social projects.

A symbolic yet special award goes to ANTITESI which, in a city as conservative, blind, deaf and dumb as Palermo, through Live!iXem yells the silence of those artistic voices which are smothered and lost among the loud noise of non-cultural initiatives supported by institutions.

That has been just a presentation of what Live!iXem's IV edition is and will be. All I am waiting for now is to enter this little great world, to breathe, listen, look and store everything it will give to me and write about it next time!!! .

www.ixem.it

www.antitesi.org

www.myspace.com/antitesi_palermo

Graffiti Research Lab: Writers As Hackers As Artists

Monica Ponzini



Real and virtual spaces, cities and new media. These are the domains of confrontation of the new semantic clashes, made of massified and pre-digested messages on one hand, and free circulation, manipulation and expression of ideas on the other. The main characters are big companies, buying ads spaces to spark the consumerism at the basis of their economies, versus individuals, sometimes gathered in little independent groups, using new technologies for realising and using expressions means and the net to communicate and join in.

In NY, one of the most active groups in this light is the GRL - Graffiti Research Lab, a think tank created by Evan Roth and James Powderly. They

match open source and practical technologies of metropolitan activism (on this subject we widely spoke about in the 23 rd issue of DigiMag, in April 2007,

(<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=791>).

Some of their instrument of unconventional communication have been realised by themselves or by groups of people who have developed their projects previously published on the web. Not only in NY, but also in other cities of all around the world. Starting from the LED Throwies, that are coloured LED provided with a magnet, unintentionally “famous” actors of a guerrilla marketing episode arranged by an ads agency and even (mis)taken for a terrorist attack. To end up with the LASER Tag, a device not giving a coat of paint upon buildings, but “pointing” a shaft of light coming from a projector reproducing writings and draws laid out by a laser reflector.

Their last intervention took place last 1 st December at the Enzimi Festival in Rome. They joined in at the explicit

request of Marco Mancuso, director of Digicult and curator of their performance and conference (whose main subject was indeed the direct relationship among writers, city hackers and open source communities of all throughout the world). During their first “arrival” in Italy , in an old FIAT 500 covered by coloured LED, they drove for the streets of the Roman district “Testaccio”, in the centre of Rome , along Tiber , to reach the Roman Pyramid Cestia. They showed a long and meaningful demo of digital graffiti-art on the walls of this building. Not only. They also allowed passers-by and writers to draw freely with lasers.



After their beginning at the OpenLab of Eyebeam, a centre for experimentation on digital art and new technologies, Evan and James gave birth to a spin-off, the so-called F.A.T. Lab, Free Art and Technology Lab. Their main objective was allowing

the development of open source also in the pop culture which seems to be dominated by the rules of a standardised market. In NY, they spoke with us about GRL and their next projects .

Monica Ponzini: How did GRL start?

James: GRL GRL started because Evan and I -without knowing each other- just simultaneously applied for a fellowship at Eyebeam. Jonah Peretti was starting a lab all based on open source technology research, more like pop culture versions of these sort of DIY projects. He's done a lot with software here at Eyebeam and got a big grant for this lab for artists and engineers. Evan was the artist, I was the engineer. We met, we looked at each other's work and it just kind of naturally evolved from there. The first project we put up on the web were the LED Throwies and we created the website www.graffitiresearchlab.com .

Evan: It made sense for us to do public space graffiti work within an art and technology context. We see this similarity between graffiti writers and hackers: graffiti writers sort of hack the city, street artists and pranksters sort of hack public spaces to twist systems that happens in the city into sort of their own message, and hackers do that in a digital sense, so it made sense to get these two groups

of people meeting each other and talking to each other. We tried to reach out and work with as many graffiti writers as we can, we have met enough people that have been a good influence on us and hopefully we had something to offer back to them.



Monica Ponzini: What's the philosophy behind GRL?

Evan: Our longstanding mission statement is that we develop open source tools for artists and pranksters and protesters and I think that still remains true. In general I think we kind of come back to this idea of sort of leveling some sort of communication playing field between the voice that certain groups have in the city like, advertisers have a very large scale voice, like in any big city of the world. We don't work for them, we kind of work on the opposite side. They already have this very big public presence and we sort of see our

mission as giving us and our friends and people who don't have the means to buy billboard space how do we give their messages the same scale, we live here, there should be our messages up there, not theirs. Lots of our research is like "wow, how for cheap can we make something that is easily reproduced by people who don't have a ton of resources".

Monica Ponzini: How did you develop your cooperation with Eyebeam and how did you develop your new project, the F.A.T. Lab, in Brooklyn ?

James: we had a fellowship for a year-long residency and that first year was about developing LED Throwies and a number of other projects, that have culminated with the development of the Laser Tag System. Then we reapplied for another fellowship and the next year began with Laser Tag and touring that over the country and all over the world. Then we curated a show here at Eyebeam with a bunch of our friends kind of our heroes - and public artists who do work without permission. We just recently have left Eyebeam, we didn't reapply for a third fellowship. We decided to start sort of a spin-off of Eyebeam.

The Open Lab is still an interesting, new viable concept, an open source sort of art-technology lab, but we didn't wanted to just limit it to the

arts, there's a lot of elements of pop culture, like the entertainment industry, the music industry, that is ready to open up and say "we've been doing open source for years". We wanted to start our own lab that was looking at not just the arts, but also looking at that kind of entertainment pop-culture and try to push open source further in, just the way Linux has pushed the open source into web-server market. And they actually make up over 50% of the web-server market, so we're like: "why aren't 50% of entertainers doing their work without copyright?". Obviously they aren't, or maybe 50% of the entertainment that we know, not that 1% that makes all the records and all the money.

Evan: And some of that does exist too, it's already there, it's just that people haven't realized it yet .



James: And there's also a strong opposition culture, just like in public

spaces, this opposition culture are advertisers, who'd rather keep the streets covered with their imagery than open it up to get it free for all. Same thing is true in the entertainment industry, you have organizations who actively oppose any loosening of trademark or copyrights. Just like the urban spaces need this opposition voice, to get little voices bigger, we think that in the entertainment industry there also need to be this opposition voice, someone saying "we got to bury the hatchet over copyright and move forward". And the record industry is suffering because of their inability to adjust to a changing distribution market, there's a lot of stagnancy and now it's not an exciting time for the record industry, we think that if the open source pushes into it, you could have people who are doing interesting work. We're not the bearers of bad news, just like in public space, we're trying to say "this has been working, it could work a lot better if we weren't always fighting each other."

The lab we're doing in Brooklyn is called F.A.T. Lab, Free Art and Technology Lab, all the GRL's work is sponsored by the F.A.T Lab. We're about to get an actual space, right now we just have a virtual one with a bunch of virtual fellows. John Johnson, the guy who puts this sort of roof over Eyebeam's head, is giving us the initial support to start this new

lab. Part of the deal with Eyebeam is that, just like the GRL now, we reached the stage where people from all over the world say “hey, can I start my own Graffiti Research Lab”, we want this F.A.T. Lab concept to be the same way, just like with our tools the open source aspect of that -, we’re doing that with the bureaucratic process of starting your own non-profit organization. And starting a non-profit is not simple .



Monica Ponzini: What’s the difference between counterculture in the States and in the rest of the world?

James: In particular in Europe , there’s this notion that the fringe of culture is part of culture Depending on the country, there are various degrees of acceptance of the counterculture. In Mexico City graffiti is prosecuted, in other countries is more tolerated. We happen to live in one of the least tolerant cities in the world for graffiti. New York City has been at war with

graffiti and really set the standards for other cities. So now you have a city like Barcelona , that previously has been accepting counterculture, to the point that graffiti tourism was an actual market for them, they followed the same “zero tolerance” laws.

Evan: Maybe, just like New York , Barcelona is trying to keep its downtown “clean” for the tourists.

James: But in New York there’s more freedom of speech than in other American cities, just like Hong Kong compared to the rest of China . And talking about being liberal, art organizations tend to be the least liberal. They’re made up of liberal people who are scrounging around for tiny amounts of dollars, and the people who hold these dollars tend to be from that dominant culture, so these art organizations find themselves in the position where, more than others, have to censor the works. So we got into the practice of turning down commissions you’d be surprised how much an art museum is willing to censor its artists .



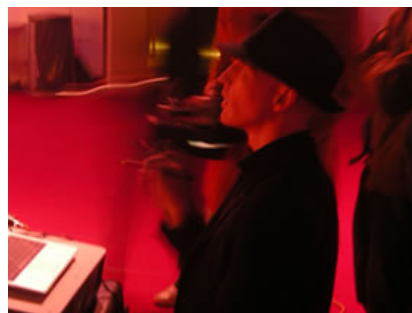
open source distribution.

Monica Ponzini: What do you think about the “Mooninites scare” in Boston a guerrilla-marketing action that was made with LED devices placed in several parts of the city and identified as a bomb-based terrorist action, and that ended up with the arrest of the two artists involved?

James: We had an interesting introduction. One of our students had gone to Boston , to a street art convention, and with one of his friend saw up on a overpass what he thought were a bunch of LED Throwies. He and his friend, drunk, climbed up on this thing and pulled it down, broke it, had to reassemble it, took a bunch of pictures and put them on Flickr. And it got covered by make magazine and a few others, and this was about 3 weeks before the Homeland Security Department found out about it. The technologies are even published online and it been talked about by Make Magazine who identified them correctly as non-violent marketing campaigns for this upcoming movie. My student communicated with the actual marketer at Intereference, Inc., who posted a video on the Internet saying “inspired by the brilliant creativity of the Graffiti Research Lab”. And this was exactly the opposite of what we really wanted, but we downloaded for presentations, to show the reach of

When the Homeland Security Department called the student, they were like: look we know you’re involved in this, we see this is tagged GRL, is that who did this? We told him to tell them who the real authors were. Meanwhile, all these major media outlets were still calling us, and wanted to know if we were involved and if not, what our take was, but we blacked out. We noticed that on that day they’ve removed their video from YouTube and we just put it back up on our site saying it was not the work of the GRL, that this was just corporate vandalism, the other side of graffiti, and we were the opposite gang. We try just to ignore these marketing campaigns that uses our technologies. There’s a sort of “collective brain” on the Internet who can distinguish between real counterculture and marketing campaigns.

In the end, the whole Boston Mooninites thing introduced LED Trowies to the mainstream a little bit, but mostly it’s just another example of how the US administration turned a cartoon into a bomb scare.



Monica Ponzini: How do you usually conceive your projects?

Evan: We don't tend to put up really polished, finished art projects on our website, it is like research for us. Throwies are an example: we don't consider it a finished project, is just something you can do for a dollar. In general it's us brainstorming and thinking "how can we get our voices up in the city bigger and brighter and cheaper?"

James: Usually there's an incomplete assumption like: magnets can make it much easier to get stuff up in the city-, we make something, we release it on the Internet, it gets chewed up, spitted back out, and at a certain point our names matter less and less in the picture and it's more about the works .

Monica Ponzini: Your works, your message circulate mainly through the Internet, often virally. In a way, it reminds me of M dot Strange, who "distributed" his movie We Are The Strange thanks to the Internet. Do you think that's your case?

James: The only difference with M dot Strange is that he made an experience for other people and they found it and really enjoyed it, and he finished the job a little more than we do. We get it started and we had it over, we do the

outline, the Internet then does the filling. The Internet now is the place that mainstream culture looks to find its contents, so people like M dot Strange or like GRL get to go to the big Festivals. The Internet and the other micromedia channels are saturated and "infected" by advertisers, but still, it's a big enough space that gives us an opportunity to get our works out there.



Evan: We put something on the Internet, it's always intentional, it's the biggest graffiti technology anyone has available, if you're interested in getting eyeballs on your work. Having good content is the number one way to get circulation.

James: And not just "good" content, but unique content, content that has what Jonah Peretti calls the "holy shit factor", and M dor Strang got the "holy shit factor", and probably we do too: an engineer and an architect who got together to do this graffiti project, all

open source on the Internet, and try our best to keep pulling open source as far as the major media will let us go .

<http://graffitiresearchlab.com/>

<http://muonics.net/blog/index.php?postid=15>

<http://fffff.at/>

Gordan Savicic: Technosurveillance Martyr

Teresa De Feo

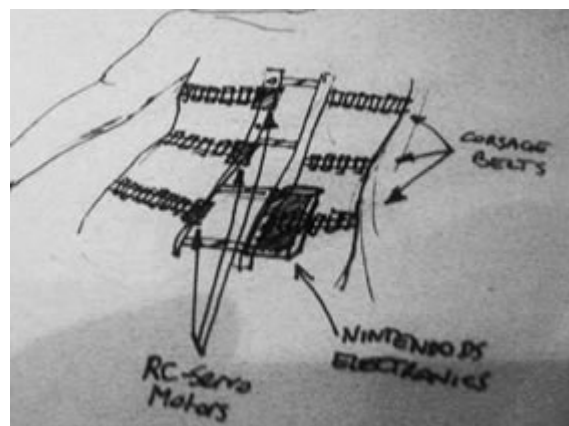


Between bodyart and “situationist electropunk”, fetish and technocratic musing: the Viennese artist Gordan Savicic speaks about “the pain of everyday life”. That’s the title of his new work *The pain of everyday life - Constrain city*, presented in Rotterdam during V2 Testlab.

A work of controversial influences, where some thematic threads dear to the artist seem to interact in a redundant way: from Michel de Certeau’s cartographical emphasis, to De Sade’s and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch sadistic pleasures, all the way, not surprisingly, to Baudelaire and his flâneurs, with their derives in labyrinthine and infernal cities. Sterlac and cybernetic bodyart, immaterial paths in post modern metropolises, chronologically conclude the journey in Savicic’s “poetics of martyrdom”.

Gordan Savicic’s contemporary flâneur walks the streets of surveilled cities wearing a corset equipped with constrictive mechanisms. The special garment picks up electromagnetic signals generated by wireless networks that are scattered through the metropolitan environment. In areas with especially high levels of electromagnetic waves, the corset tightens around the brave rambler’s waist, marking the skin with deep wounds.

The access points are picked up by a Nintendo DS Lite console, and a Linux Gentoo release attached to it transforms the radio waves into kinetic energy.

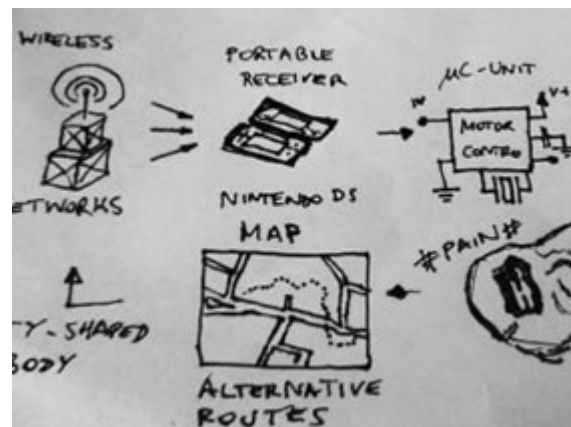


The performance closes with the production, through a GIS system

(geographic information system), of a series of maps of his dangerous metropolitan hikes, where the areas with the highest density of electromagnetic waves are highlighted. These correspond to the deepest wounds on the artist's body.

The artist and the city fuse together and get lost in the splitting of invisible paths. While the individual and his traces seem to dissolve in the numerical decodification of their passing by the technological extensions sensitive to the space that is crossed, the city manages to leave physical traces on the epidermis of the passer by, almost like an eloquent metaphor of the violent intrusion of the digital tech's tentacles.

The perverted pleasure of everyday martyrdom is all that is left for the passer by: an abandonment to the power of control and surveillance. A letting go that is transformed in a erotic submission to technological sadism.



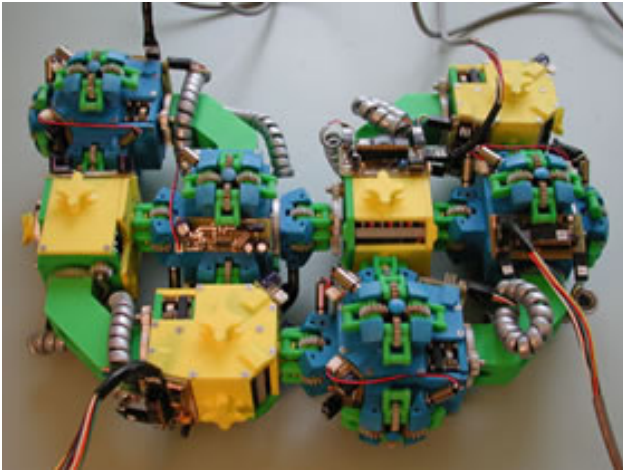
Cronenberg, after his “carnal” musings and videodrome systems, turned to the analysis of more interesting forms of control. Is this really how we imagine the future? And what about the present time? Let's leave the masochists to their revolting technological frolicking. Let's leave the fanatic martyrs of modernity to their quest for redemption.

For my part, I am unbuckling my corset.

<http://www.yugo.at/equilibre/>

Polymorphic Intelligence: Part 2

Luigi Pagliarini



As far as we know, the human being is the most “intelligent” organism. Their brain includes a number of functions so complex and sophisticated that, when the neurologist and psychologist Howard Gardner in his *Frames of Mind* tries to recap its structure, he comes up with seven sub-structures: Linguistic Intelligence, Logic-Mathematical Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence and Intrapersonal Intelligence.

Surely thanks to a very refined biological evolution of its calculating skills, the human race has been able to reach an equal high level of social and technological evolution too. What we are about to reach now, is what can be called *automaton era* . Nevertheless, among us humans,

some enlightened artists (such as W. Shelley , G. Orwell , P.K. Dick) have caught a glimpse of where we were heading for and thus tried to imagine what it would have been like in order to prevent the ethic and moral decadence of our species and our societies.

It was Isaac Asimov in particular who uttered the famous three Robotic rules: 1) A robot may not injure humanity, nor, through inaction, allow humanity to come to harm; 2) A robot has to obey what it is told by humans, unless their orders are in contrast with the First Rule; 3) A robot has to protect its existence, unless its self-defence is in contrast with the First and Second Rule.



While the artists anticipated the

philosophical principles of the future relation between human beings and machines, on the other hand some scientists started to define actual principles. Among the others, it is worth remembering A. Turing, who defined through the notorious Turing Test the meaning of Artificial Intelligence. A machine can be defined “intelligent” if a human being is not able to tell human answers from machine answers during a conversation where the three of them are engaged.

Those two conceptual paradigms were crucial to everything that followed and guided the development of AI and robotics. Yet, as it has often happened in the history of ideas, what has been a point of reference and inspiration for decades, can suddenly turns into a hindrance for further developments in ideas. Probably both Asimov’s rules and Turing Test (as well as other authors’ rules) are currently too influential, while actually they are completely obsolete.

Since then things have changed and both the goals and the very definition of AI changed. As a matter of fact, Turing Test has been completely overcome and AI is moving fast towards the idea of Collective Intelligence let’s take for example the Swarms and the Boids while the robot’s shape itself is turning into a mechanical multidimensional

structure able to adapt see the Atrons- thus losing its canonic anthropomorphous aspect and its old static mono-corporal structure. Furthermore, AI has started widening its views and is aiming at interfacing with biology, leading us to consider the actual beginning of a Multiple, Manifold and Polymorphic Intelligence which implies a deep interaction at different levels. That is what happens in virtual worlds (such as SecondLife), as well as in real worlds (such as MipTiles), and mixed realities (Stelarc, Talkers, Ambient Addiction).



In other words, it is no longer possible to look for a single artificial linear process within AI; on the contrary the new conception implies a multidimensional and not linear process which cannot be easily manipulated and which cannot be totally controlled . Things are already getting complicated if we consider that, instead of the old conceptions of interactivity

(activate/deactivate/ignore) we start a real time multisensorial dynamic interaction (that is to say an interrelation) with a single "species" of artifact (or AI algorithm). But if we consider the possibility of interacting with a multitude of artifacts (or AI algorithm) at the same time, then things get "elusive".

The obvious conclusion is that Asimov's Rules become inconsistent with such assumptions. On the one hand, machines cannot be controlled any longer, for the problems we ask them to solve are not linear and incomplete from a mathematical point of view; on the other hand, being widely interconnected to one another, they are no longer the only and direct responsible for the general output of the system.



With this new point of view, we need to renew our methodology and leave

the idea of Human-Machine Interaction (or Interaction Design) to move towards the idea of Bio-Tech Interrelation, according to which the interaction with machines is simply more uncertain and, more important, completely different from the one we knew in the past.

As a matter of fact, the very interaction moves from a one-direction stream of intelligence (man=>machine) to a double-direction one (man ó machine) as well as a many-direction one (biological intelligences ó artificial intelligences). Actually, there is a factor that we may call here Imitative Intelligence which was not considered by Howard yet indirectly confirmed by Rizzolatti's latest experiments and, more generally by common sense, which suggests that that intellectual feedback we triggered with artificial intelligence has a real "boomerang" effect, an intellectual "Larsen effect" which has to be considered seriously since it will be surely crucial for the future theories on man-machine relations (or, as we like AI, Robot, Cyborg, or Android).

Those theories will inevitably lead to conceive intelligence no longer as an exclusively biological means, rather a domain crossbred by machines, thus Polymorphic Intelligence.

Mutamorphosis: Challenging Arts And Science

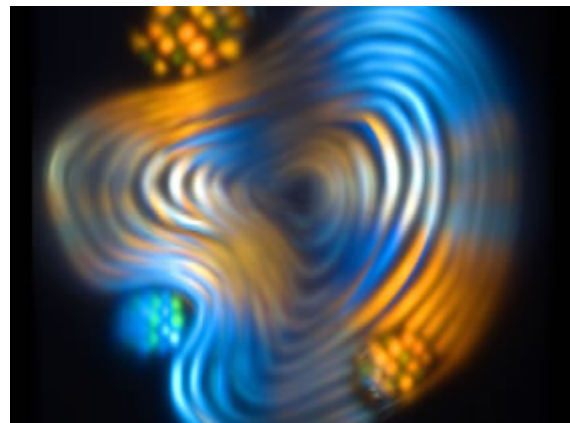
Silvia Scaravaggi



From 8th to 11th November Prague has been protagonist of the third edition of the international festival Enter3, dedicated to the relationship between art, science and new technologies, with a series of expositions, performances, panels, workshops and the Mutamorphosis symposium, meeting and exchange point between students, artists, scientists from all over the world.

The title itself, enter, means and suggests the point of view through which the different themes are coped with. Enter can be the keyboard button, used to start an application, to head on with a work, to begin a new process, as well as the trigger of a potentially destructive command. This double path is found in expositive proposals of artists and inside speakers themes, so numerous that

we will not be able to explain each input (among all Roy Ascott, Victoria Vesna and James Gimzewski, Albert-László Barabási), but rather follow a partial trajectory through some suggestive proposal that will rotate around fundamental questions. How are art science and new technologies related? Which are areas where this interrelation can grow? Which is artist and scientist role in this exploration, but most of all how does the collaboration in “sci-art”, thanks to new technologies, modify actors roles of this metamorphosis?



Everywhere, technology importance is underlined by the role of mediation between research and creativity and the artist is seen as the guide that discover those unknown spaces and as the person that better knows the

process of creation with a consciousness of the society.

During the Mutamorphosis symposium speakers followed a trail, clear in Louis Bec speech, in its declination of “extremofilia” meaning. Hot theme of last period is extreme realities, examined by numerous research centers and sector publications, first of all Leonardo magazine, that co-organized the event,

As Bec underlines, extreme territories are both the unexplored space as well as areas where men live in “impossible” conditions, so all the zones where men experience different realities and live the relation with new technologies as something extremely necessary to face the averse conditions or even as indispensable instrument to access those conditions.



The universe, the endless space, the

infinitely little, the nano-world, the territories of danger and conflict, the surrounding environment, the artificial and human identity, the post-human are some of the principle themes. In these scientific and artistic activities the relation between art, science and new technologies is no more a surplus, but a fundamental and essential condition that would not let any kind of exploration and reflection going on if absent.

Around those arguments there's a nucleus of activities and research that are proved during Mutamorphosis conference and the expositions in Prague, one above all the Unsafe Distance exhibition, managed by Pavel Sedlák, that presents about twentyworks and international research, where artists and scientists worked together.

The awaited and disconcerting work by Stelarc, Australian artist that presented one of his extreme experimentations about integration between technologic elements in body with “extra ear: ear on arm” project, is the clear and excessive example of body as post-human privileged location of exploration. Stelarc force the human limits, he trespass them thanks to new technologies, experimenting on himself the powerfulness and ability to amplification in terms of consciousness.



Experimentation in some research laboratory made by some artists aim to biological, organic and environmental aspects of the research, as in Shawn Bailey and Jennifer Willet installation, who documents the evolution of a teratoma with the “Bioteknika: teratologies”, or in “Martian Rose” by c-lab (Howard Bolan and Laura Cinti) where a rose is closed in an environment similar to the Martian one. Sometime the artist make the spectator in front of danger situations, typical of the conflict.

Repeatedly works that recreates atmosphere using military footage are found (“The all seeing eye I.+II.” by Radim Lauda, “whatever you say say nothing! II .” by Luká Machalick, “Safe Distance” by kuda.org) or installations with counters activated by the passage, simulating the countdown, as in “Light Insecurity” by Pavel Kopriva, or in “Sounds from Dangerous Places” by Peter Cusack,

where sonorities remember the conflict zones ones.

A key element in knowledge and comprehension of artistic practices that consider the interdependence between art, science and technologies is the overtaking of boundaries, not only physical and spatial, but also sensorial and cognitive. The passage from a body and human consciousness to a post-human consciousness is realized also through a better attention to senses.



If sight has been privileged in human history, following the red wire traced by Mutamorphosis interventions and festival expositions, it is evident the movement of artists and cultural environment to less explored senses, such as hearing and touch

Paul Thomas' work is a key contribute in this direction, coordinator of the Studio of Electronic Arts at the Curtin University of Technology and artistic director of the Biennale of Electronic

Arts in Perth. “Midas”, his work, is based on the collaboration with the SymbioticA Lab, the University of Western Australia and the Institute of Nano-Chimic Research of the Curtin University.

Paul describes Midas as a double phase research. First sound, then visual that result into an interactive A/V installation, where hearing and touch are directly involved to understand the work. The project focuses space between elements: skin and gold, analyzing what happens between cells in the moment of the contact at nano-metric level. Exploration is possible thanks to the atomic microscope, technologic disposal that catch the vibrations on cells surface and between them. The collected data have been analyzed and transformed into sound files as principle resource to realize the installation, and secondly in a projection of visible data.

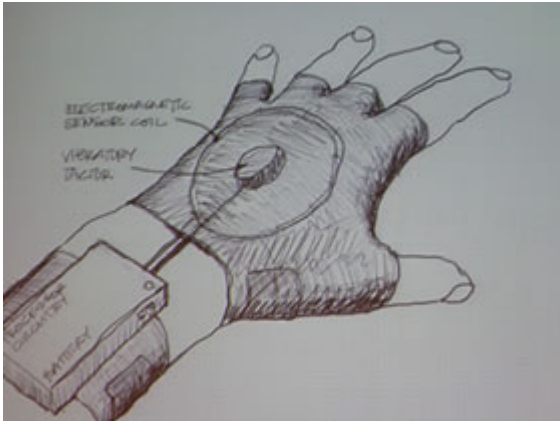


Midas tries to turn the infinitely little into something audible and palpable. The final installation can be used in a closed space where there's a support that hold a gold table. The spectator can approach it and touch its surface. The meeting of skin and gold activate the sound projection of the vibrations that the two elements create. The visual projection is a digital image of a single cell interested by a genetic algorithm based on the collected data, a visual of the transformations that happen at nano-metric level at every single graze.

Paul Thomas realized this work continuing his artistic practice. He always cared about the exploration of the spatiality project and the relation between body, space and architectural structures. In Midas, he reduced the scale of this exploration, focusing the attention on vision, on consciousness and restrictions of prospective at nano-level. He underlines that his research is an attempt to develop new modalities to understand and be in the world.

During the Mutamorphosis conference, Paul Thomas held a lecture titled “Boundaryless nanomorphologies” through which he illustrated some key themes of its artistic soul. Talking about this, he underlined the intention to transmit through art the meaning of the meeting with nanotechnology. This

new discipline united to biotechnology changed and will change the modalities to conceive reality. Nano-metric processes are amazing, as well as terrifying, because they reveal revolutionary and powerful abilities and properties of the matter.



They change our idea of the world, they show how much our senses are limited in the knowledge of new territories. Thanks to new technologies and to a new interpretation of our senses, touch above all, key element of perceptions, we can ask ourselves how to mentally interpret these processes.

Sight is the prince instrument through which man explores world. But, exploring new unknown worlds, the infinitely huge space or the infinitely little of quant, it uses a new sight, possible only through technique. New technologies give back something that allows the access to new worlds

that would be humanly and naturally inaccessible.

To face this important theme Roger Malina is relevant, spatial scientist and American astronomer, as well as son of Frank J Malina, founder of Leonardo magazine, who dedicated in Prague an intimate retrospective during the festival.

In Malina "Limits of Cognition: Artists in the Dark Universe" the scientist experience in searching the unknown realizes when human nature and its senses are insufficient to explore and understand the expanded reality of the universe. That's the reason why science and technology work together building disposals that allow the humanity to get closer to what is humanly off limits. Malina evidences the necessity of a new "sensuality" and says: "As scientists keep on extending perception and soul limits in these new extreme areas, artists have the important role to shape the future science". Therefore the artist role is situated in a central position, creating new metaphors that allow humanity to access new cultures.



Enter3 and Mutamorphosis – as the director Pavel Smetana himself underline- are attentive to the social and political sphere, to the contemporary history, as they ask questions about scientists and artists role in all the collective ambits.

The reference frame those events gave back was not only a focus on

new researches in an hybrid zone, but also a laboratory on which ask questions about world politics and societies, with an open eye on science and art role in all the change and transformation zones.

www.mutamorphosis.org

www.enter3.org

Zymogen.net, Italian Netlabel Grow Up

Giuseppe Cordaro



Is it the internet the future of music? This could be the beginning question to start a reflection about the netlabels universe, a word that is filling the web pages during last years, and not the musical ambit ones.

But what is a netlabel? A netlabel (also online label, web label or MP3 label) is a record label that distributes its music primarily through digital audio formats (mainly MP3 or Ogg Vorbis) over the Internet. These music-files are often called netaudio. While similar to traditional record labels in many respects, netlabels typically emphasize free distribution online, often under licenses that encourage works to be shared (e.g., Creative Commons licenses), and artists usually retain copyright. Most employ guerrilla marketing to promote their work; few netlabels earn money for

participants. (From: Wikipedia)

These are the principals characteristics of a phenomenon that, started as niche situation, is growing more and more interest, collecting a growing number of artists and lovers, giving birth to a series of festivals and manifestations of high level, such as Quartz Awards, out-and-out festival dedicated to netlabels that is held in Paris every year.

We talked about that with Filippo Aldovini, deus ex machina of Zymogen, italian netlabel that produces and distributes high level releases with an international touch.



Giuseppe Cordaro: How and when did you decide to create Zymogen?

Filippo Aldovini: The idea was born by

the need to valorize a passion for a sound that was not easy to share in a little reality such as Modena, the city I live in. The absence of a scene where I could lean on and to which refer to, brought me to cut all the links with the local dimension, and this radical imprinting projected the entire project on the Net, the non-place where i found unimaginable inspirations and resources.

There's no need to say that the principal source has been the net-audio scene, that I started since 2004 following with constance and passion. I've been astonished by the foresight of some realities such as Thinner,

12rec, Test Tube and Khavi who worked ethically and qualitatively. Thanks to the Net, I got in touch with artists of high level from all over the world, who believed in my project since its born. Artists such as David Velez, aka Lezrod, first producer that published on Zymogen in September 2005, with whom I had a confrontation and I experimented, making "Retorno a la Nada", the debut album for Zymogen and Lezrod, being nominated in 2006 as best album of experimental electronic music at Quartz award of Paris, winning the selection of Pierre Henry, pioneer of concrete music. I think now that this path couldn't have had a better start.



Giuseppe Cordaro: Which is your netlabel genre?

Filippo Aldovini: Every single release has been the result of a research in different sound areas. As time went by, the digital and ambient minimalism became the guide line of the label, but I'm pretty sure about the value of changing, so I don't want to fix rigid limits to the future sound.

Giuseppe Cordaro: Is there netlabels you're inspired to?

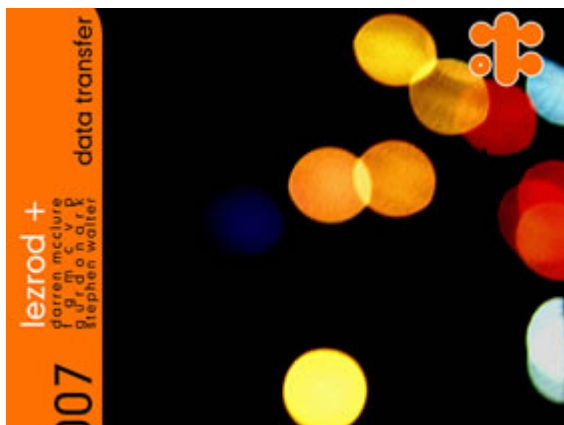
Filippo Aldovini: I attentively follow the scene around 12k and its parallel projects: Line and Term netlabel. I admire Taylor Dupree, the coherence and professionalism that fulfill his projects, his devotion to design and quality of his publications. Type, Raster-Noton, but also less known projects such as Anticipate and the Greek Poeta Negra are some other reference labels. Talking about web realities, I'm very close to all the

netlabels I worked with or I had artistic exchanges, such as Serein, 12rec, Miasmah and Autoplate.

Giuseppe Cordaro: Which is your role inside Zymogen and how are the creative processes managed?

Filippo Aldovini: I'm the manager of the project, and this means I'm in charge of every detail in person. Artistic direction, communication work, on-line promotion, contacting the artists. The only collaborator, Tomaso Neri, designed the structure of the web site and its code, a fundamental aspect for a project that prefers the on-line dimension. Talking about my role, I choose the human contact with artists that is active part of the creative process. I completely mirror myself in Manfred Eicher words, founder and director of the ECM, when he says "...I never dispute style, that is up to the artist, but I'm convinced that music is born before being recorded and I like talking with artists about intonation, time. I like being the active listener, a mirror for the artist. But I search for its sound, not mine. The only unifying track is the clearness of sound".

Starting from those presupposition and caring about all the musical, graphical or content details, I always try to keep the qualitative standard at the high level I tried to achieve from the first day.



Giuseppe Cordaro: Your releases are characterized by a researched graphic and a particular aesthetic, could you say something about?

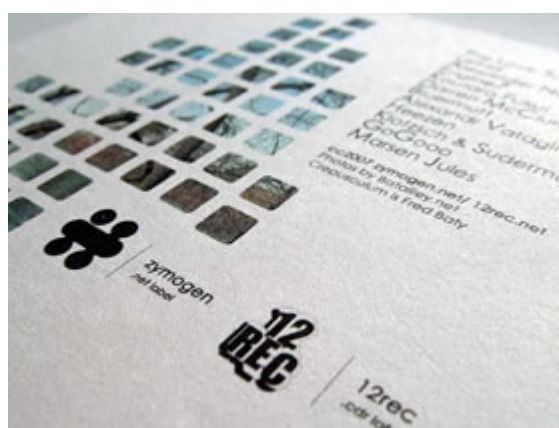
Filippo Aldovini: The aesthetic aspect is a fundamental aspect of Zymogen identity. The net releases thousands of inputs on our memory, and that's the reason why it is fundamental, now more than ever, to leave a sign with a striking image that has a strong link with sound. There's no difference between scanning CDs filed in shelves and staring at the screen that proposes virtual covers of netlabels catalogues... The quick glance will make people curious and perhaps interests the potential listener.

Giuseppe Cordaro: Zymogen, from Modena, published international releases. Does it have an strict editorial line or does Italy lack of worth projects?

Filippo Aldovini: Zymogen is an international project, the fact that is

situated in Modena is only an indication. I'm convinced that Italy has interesting projects, but there's no disposition to relate with the Net, prejudices against netlabels are still spread, but I think that time and valid projects can make netlabels and quality walk together.

Fabio Battistetti is working in this direction. He's the soul of Chew-z and agitator of the Netaudio Italian scene. He organized a discussion forum about the last Club to Club edition (that will double at the 2007 Live Ixem edition) and he created one of the first radio programs about Netlabels (<http://walkman-podcast.blogspot.com/>). Once this is clarified, I want to precise that there's no intention to exclude Italian artists by Zymogen roster, I simply found the international proposals more interesting. Anyway, this year we'll brake this barrier as well, finally!



Giuseppe Cordaro: How do you see

the confrontation between netlabels and classic labels?

Filippo Aldovini: I think they're interpretable models, with limits and potentialities. I think the future is the union of the two structures that are already experiment this direction. I'm talking about 12rec, Miasmah of Erik Skodvin or the same 12k of Deupree that has a sub-label, called Term, that publish online artists related to 12k. I try to consider Zymogen as an open source structure, opened to the influences of discography, not closed to discussions with users.

During those two years I received lots of agreements and the requests to publish our material on fix support are increasing, and that's the reason why I'm taking the solution more and more seriously. When I would have to spend money on Zymogen, I would do it conscious to have a users background already linked to the project that already known the qualitative level of our output.

Giuseppe Cordaro: Netlabels world owes lots to Creative Commons license. Don't you think CC philosophy gave a boost to this phenomenon?

Filippo Aldovini: For sure! Creative Commons represent the pulsing heart of the netaudio phenomenon and it is one of the few institutions able to understand the need to exploit the

net in all its potentialities. The modularity of the CC license is what mostly fit the online contents that accept the reproducibility as way to achieve a bigger audience.

Creative Commons is an alternative to "copyright" and "copyleft", as it mediates the extreme consequences of both of them. This mediation ability, this interpretation of needs, the necessities of all the users that create contents are the success keys of this project. I consider CC as an interpretation of the author rights that keep in mind the technologies potentials.



Giuseppe Cordaro: ...what about netlabel future?

Filippo Aldovini: Netlabels future passes through a higher knowledge and a serious auto-critic. A bigger coordination between the guides of the phenomenon would be appreciated, as well as dialogue and disposition to consider netaudio in all

its stylistic variations, without focusing on a particular genre. There's also the problem of low level netlabels, even if such projects are destined to fail and being forgot. The important thing is not leaving the idea of netlabel as distributor of music without contents pass. Netlabel is a structure, a box to fill up. The content itself gives value to the project. Music is talked again, music makes the difference.

Giuseppe Cordaro: some anticipations...

Filippo Aldovini: As I already said, I'm realizing the first physical release of

Zymogen, but there's no deadline, so it will be ready when the final product will rise to the occasion. The website will begin 2008 with two releases, an EP by Letna, Parisian producer, coordinator of StandardKlik (<http://standard-music.net/>), near to Keiichi Sugimoto sound (Fourcolor, Filfla, Minamo), and then it will be con_cetta's time, Italian reality of whom we'll have the possibility to publish the EP that precede the album for the English Moteer ready for June.

www.zymogen.net

The Unbearable Lightness Of The Web

Marco Mancuso

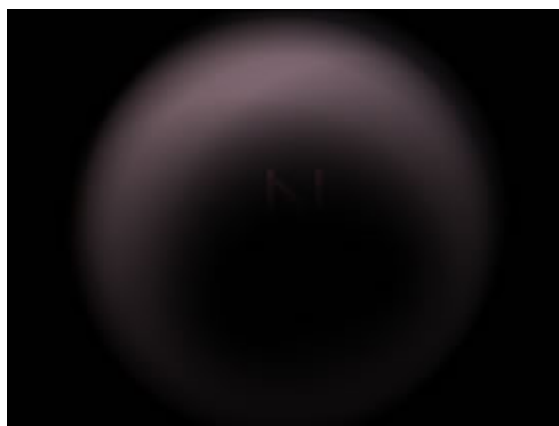


(design, video, music) known for the visualization and understanding of data flux, information, networking dynamics and sharing. On the other hand the latest production by Luca Bertini and Marco Antonini (just exhibited from 26 th October to 23 rd November at the New Yorkm ISE Cultural Foundation's gallery) is going on the opposite direction.

Now, I've been waiting for years for a net art project that tried to take the distances from the complexities of the contemporaneous digital world.

A surely short-circuiting process, it "travels" along alive nets: Nacre is a being "eating" data gathered in the net by its spiders. This work is perhaps more true and representative of a state composed by several art operations suffering the strength of an exhausted expression mean very exploited in the last years. And at the moment this latter doesn't seem to offer further technical developments, if we don't consider the latest Second Life's experiences.

So, the general trend of multimedia works, not only in the web, but also in every field and subject, is using expression codes and languages



Luca Bertini is an experienced multimedia artist, while Marco Antonini is a graphic, writer, critic and part of the Ps1 in NY. The twosome succeeded in a difficult goal in the nowadays redundant electronics art, that is to say avoiding to be easily fired, daring theories and the pompous settings conveyed by the digital mean, while on the other hand quietly developing a thought on the

nature and complexity characterising the hyper-mediated world around us. And for realising it, the best mean is the same simplicity, the most close friend and also image for fear, apprehension, shyness.

Nacre, this is the name of the neat art you can find at the web site: www.nacre.cc . It is not meant to explain the web complexities, but hide from them. It doesn't want to understand, describe or be part of a world that seems not to get: indeed, it wants to flee, shield and withdraw. And as a pearl producing its own beauty, the typical cover in mother-of-pearl (*Nacre*) , it reacts at the external influences (organic materials and pests can constitute a danger for the oyster), defending with subtle layers of hexagonal petals made of a substance called Aragonite. Tanzini e Antonini's digital entity seems to beat of own life, modifying their own structure, protecting itself from interferences and anomalies felt like enemies of a net no more able to create a linear and unmistakable relationship.



Avoiding at last, for a time, any critical and aesthetical ambition, just mirrors the ambiguity of a net that is apparently out of control. hasn't got a definite aim, it hasn't to be beautiful, it's an anti-image, as defined by its own creators.

From an unimaginable complexity of the nowadays net, looking from far and with snooty cheerfulness, at what was happening just 5-6 years ago, Bertini and Antonini's Nacre just protects itself, from the moment of the first contact to the abandon to its fears: afraid but beautiful, it lives and survives, adding layers and layers of hexagonal petals to its complex structure. Each time the spider hiding behind the net appears with a new series of marvellous and obscure data lines.

www.nacre.cc

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIKrk6vYlpU

Festival Cultania, Culture From Southern Italy

Annamaria Monteverdi



Sold out for Cultania Festival, organized by the councillorship for Culture, within the project "The Multimedia Centre of the Archaeological Park" (Por Sicilia 2000 - 2006 "Catania, metropolitan city").

To say it with figures, ten thousand people for two-week theatre events, from the 13th October to the 4th November 2007, 450 spectators only to Roberto Zappalà and Giovanni Sollima performance, 1800 to the event Soundwalking on Etna lava sand with Alvin Curran, one of the pioneers of environment music who founded Musica Elettronica Viva together with Stefano Zorzanello, a musician from Veneto who lives now in Catania. The whole staff, headed by the dynamic Salvatore Zinna, the film and theatre director who conceived this festival, has all the rights to be satisfied with it.

Cultania Festival is especially dedicated to contemporary performances and to the theatre combined with technologies in a city, Catania, which is living a great euphoria period, both from an artistic and experimental point of view, inside of extraordinary active spaces, which significantly contributed to the success of the event (from Zo-Centro di Culture Contemporanea, to Scenario Pubblico run by Roberto Zappalà, through to Teatroclub run by Nando Greco and Teatro Sangiorgi).

The considerable Cultania portfolio included: four theatre companies from Catania, six nationally and two internationally acclaimed companies, national previews and workshops. Among them Teatrino Clandestino, Wee Company, Masque, Daniela Orlando, Lenz, Roberto Latini, Fabrizio Arcuri. We have to thank the animator and festival promoter Zinna for designing what he calls "the publishing project" of Cultania and for the uneasy search for financial supports from the European Union. Cultania is a real innovation inside of the national scenery for what concerns research events dedicated to the most pioneering proposals in

technologies on stage for theatre, dance, music, visual arts, in a complex genre intermix: from sound spazializations to special soundwalkings that combine ecology, landscape and sound, through to the theatre that uses videos and interactive interfaces. Cultania is a real Catalonia-Catania brotherhood that saw the alternation of Marcel·lì Antunez Roca with his Protomembrana and [Kònic thtr] , an artistic platform dedicated to contemporary digital creation, both coming from Barcelona .

Italian preview for Noul_D by Konic THTR, founded by Rosa Sánchez and Alain Baumann , never in Italy before the premiere in Catania. It is a very strong and sensational technopolitical show, and not just for the interactive technology that has been used (digital video cameras for the optical capture of the dancers' movement amid the space, biosensors applied to bodies for motion capture).



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Noul_D is as an electronic interactive show for dance and voice, especially set up for Cultania, with some changes compared to the previous version which was presented at the Mercat de Flor in Madrid, about identity, marginal territories, urban and human suburbs, where human beings become unstable particles, in the endless mutability and uncertainty of a world broken to pieces, in a waste land. Let's take advantage of our visit to Catania in occasion of the Italian preview of Konic to talk to Salvatore Zinna, the true essence of the festival. He is about to release his first feature film and is also a playwright and ~~theatre director~~ **theatre director** ~~Barilong~~ **Barilong** his works , which has been really appreciated).



Salvatore Zinna says that “Technology, also high-technology, is not a niche product, it is popular, more than the traditional Sicilian cart. Nowadays technological consumption is widespread, universally accepted also in art. Then everyone can give his own interpretation. But thanks to technology you lead people to theatre and theatre must be attended by everyone, it must not be considered just like a research exercise for few people. Moreover we must discredit the rumour that associates Southern Italy with tradition and Northern Italy with innovation. It is first of all a cultural problem and not economic and it is related to the interpretation of present time. Thinking that if living in Southern Italy one can just be a repository of historical memory, involved in past revalorization, or is the final user of someone else’s cultural models is a limit.

I tried with the festival to set some fixed points, in order to reach some

aims: escaping from isolation and on the one hand putting the first infrastructural basis for the cultural project we have imagined, trying to create our own “present culture”, on the other hand generating an active context in order to give evidence to the whole system rather than to the single realities. We have placed means, spaces, visibility and instruments at disposal of those who work within independent productions. I wanted to give birth to a companies network, organize a network made of artists and institutions that otherwise would have never worked together, by creating the conditions for mutual collaboration platforms, that is to say some prototypes for possible future developments. Throughout the territory there are several companies, associations and artists who work following a precise direction, some of them with a well defined identity, for example Cane Capovolto (Alessandro Aiello) and Zo .



Some of them had already elaborated this particular approach we have immediately agreed with, but we needed an institutional representative. The Soundwalkin' project by Alvin Curran was thought in collaboration with Ente Parco Enna and Sergio Zinna from Zoculture. We have been the producers of many shows, by sharing topics and reallocating resources throughout the territory in order to start circulation and offer high quality materials to the outside. Usually circulation is a problem for companies, but in Sicily it represents a problem for everyone: leaving from here is hard, exchanges are difficult and international relationships are quite rather impossible. Among the local shows, we recommend the soundwalks around the city (Sipario sonoro), a sort of journey through the sense of hearing, the sounds of the city in the cemetery, in the quay, in the subway when not used, on the waterfront through the godd offices of Stefano Zorzanello .

The group Statale 114 will bring their work, *Van Gogh il suicidato della società* , from Cultania to Teatro Arsenale in Milan in January; the real talented Fabio Monti presented an intense performance about Lampedusa where he used images in a very simple way, but they were able to arise emotions, focusing on inhabitants and on the temporary

immigration detentiion centres. There was also Tino Caspanello, Riccione Award 2003. We also gave hospitality to many worthy works which have been relevant for updating the local companies, from Lenz Rifrazioni, to Roberto Latini, through Santasangre .

Also was intense the performance *Slave in the Cave* of the group VITE, founded by Emiliano Campagnola. It is taken from Plato. It shows a single actor on stage that plays the role of Socrates and Menone, alternating questions with answers about the possibility of virtue to be taught, in a video dialogue with his alter ego. The festiva has been amazing: full up theatres, sold out for every event, an interesting case for Sicily : a various and especially curios public attended the festival, not only experts.”



At Zoeculture we meet Stefano Zorzanello, a flautist and saxophonist dedicated to a research field near to acoustic environmentalism and sound

landscapes who founded the Soundscape Research Group. He worked in collaboration with Giorgio Barberio Corsetti composing incidental music for *Il Risveglio*, *Barcas*, *Graal* and *Woyzeck*. He realized for Cultania three urban sound walks and collaborated with Alvin Curran for the innovative and impressive event *CONVERSAZIONI GEOLOGICHE*, music in a natural environment at an high altitude on Etna slopes, in Monti Sartorius, Sant'Alfio, 1800 metres above the sea level, inside the natural Park with volunteer musicians.

"It is a low-impact-on-environment project, with non amplifications, close to the philosophy of acoustic ecology. 100 musicians worked on it, among voices, wind and percussion instruments. Also the town band participated. A modular musical score made up of 9 modules, conducted by me and Curran. Pieces performed while slowly descending in a row on lava sand till a tableland with natural echo areas, producing a suggesting acoustic interaction with the territory. At dusk 2000 persons were taken by coach or arrived with their own means of transport. In April we made an inspection and then started the workshops, opened to non-professional musicians too. The location was chosen for the beauty of the landscape: right below the volcano. The innovative character is

represented by the fact we decided not to perform Mozart or chamber music on location, we didn't perform what they usually do in a concert hall. We worked on the morphological characteristics of the territory and on a more symbolic level, on rough material. According to the Varèse's concept of *musique brut*, the volcano is musical material."



Finally we ask the director Salvo Gennuso, the founder of Statale 114 we met at Zoculture, to tell us something about his artistic contribution to Cultania Festival and his project *Filottete* taken from M?ller (with Elaine Bonsangue, Luana Toscano and Chiaraluce Fiorito) and *Van Gogh il suicidato della società* (with Elaine Bonsangue and Marcella Parito).

He says: " Cultania meant to us working with calm on two different performances, experimenting new languages and exploring new avenues

we never tried before. It meant performing our shows in a context that has an artistic mark I identify with, Fabrizio Arcuri and Roberto Latini . Cultunia has been a common platform to consider some issues, such as the combined use of different media. *Filottete* is a story about isolation, about death. Madness, detention, alienation, crows and predators, betrayal: our research developed from these words and from the Island of Melo we landed to another island, Sicily . Some say Sicily is like Denmark for Hamlet, a place where obscure plans are plot, where crows hang around Laws Courts, where betrayal is suffered like an offence against honour that must be wiped out with blood, where madness is one of the family, according to Pirandello. But the performance is not about mafia. I want to tell about prisons every human brings with him, like stemmata one's shows not on his

*Van Gogh il
suicidio della società taken from
Artaud*

skin but on his soul.

will be performed on the 9th of January in Milan . The computer graphics animations are edited by Mammasonica. It is a very choreographic performance, which starts from the attempt to be enraptured by the text meant like a vision, not like a message or words. It is a dialogue among different art forms that imagines, in a way out of ordinary, the use of various techniques and the presence of expression forms where Van Gogh's paintings, Artaud's text and stage business are silhouetted against a white surface made of Plexiglas cubes and water. The "I" is in contrast with a three-women chorus, Erinys, Moiras and the multitude of a society fossilized in action."

www.cultania.it

The Importance Of Being Interactive

Annamaria Monteverdi



Original text by Mark Coniglio

My collaborator Dawn Stoppiello and I created our dance theatre company Troika Ranch in 1994, our purpose being to create dynamic, challenging artworks that fused traditional elements of dance, music and theatre with interactive digital media.

We believed that by directly linking the actions of a performer to the sound and imagery that accompanied them, we would be led to new modes of creation and performance and, eventually, to a new form of live art work. While we cannot yet claim to have reached this latter, rather lofty, goal we have firmly established our views about interactive performance and its importance to the performer and audience. Presenting these views

is the subject of this chapter, but before I go on, I think it is worth answering a simple question: why would one want to create such artworks in the first place?

Live media / dead media

The answer begins with the a device I created in 1989 called *MidiDancer* , a sensory system that uses flexion sensors to wirelessly report the position of a dancer's joints to a computer. Software interprets the movement information, which can in turn manipulate digital media in a numerous ways: initiating the playback of musical notes or phrases, manipulating live or pre-recorded video imagery, and controlling theatrical lighting are just three of the possibilities.



But MidiDancer was not so much an answer as the beginning of the question posed above. The personal computer technology of that time had made it possible for us to use dancer's movement to generate a musical accompaniment. In other words, we did it because it had become possible to do so. We had no true notion as to why it was essential to the aesthetic expression.

It was not until 1996 that a clear answer to the question of 'why' presented itself to me. Around that time, Dawn and I had a residency at STEIM (Studio for Electro Instrumental Music) in Amsterdam . During the first three days of that residency, four separate individuals asked in passing, "Has Jorgen taken you to his room yet?" Now Jorgen, whose specialty was electronic fabrication, was one of several talented engineers at STEIM who helped the artists in residence to realise their projects. With my curiosity piqued, I finally sought him out and asked rather sheepishly, "Jorgen, can I see your room?" After nodding in the affirmative, he led me up four very steep and narrow staircases to the attic of the building. There, we came to a single white door, which he opened with some ceremony. Inside was revealed the most elaborate and extensive collection of 1960s and 1970s era analogue synthesizers I had ever seen assembled in one location. After

showing me around, he proceeded to play me several examples of his music using a single analogue sequencer to control every instrument in the room. Now, this being 1996, and at this point being completely ensconced in using digital technology myself, I was compelled to ask, "Is anything in this room digital?" He shot me a glance and replied, "Oh no!"



When asked "Why not?" he replied quite seriously "Because it is always the same." In that moment I realised that what we love about digital media was precisely what made it inappropriate for use in a live performance-it is indeed always the same. Digital media is wonderful because it can be endlessly duplicated and/or presented without fear of the tiniest change or degradation. But, it is this very quality (the media's 'deadness') that is antithetical to the fluid and ever changing nature of live performance. Each time a work is performed, any number of factors can

significantly change how it is realised in that moment-perhaps most significant being the interplay between the skill and temperament of the performers and the attitude and engagement of the audience. The downfall of digitally recorded media is that it dampens this essential fluidity by preventing the performers from changing the character of the material from moment to moment.

Organic -> electronic

I often witness the tension between recorded media and live performance when I attend performances in one of New York City 's small, alternative modern dance venues. It is almost a given in these situations that the dancers will perform to music pre-recorded on a compact disc. On any given night, these performers have the potential to give the performance of a lifetime, given the right combination of skill, an understanding of their instrument (i.e. their body) in relation to the material that they are to perform, and an awareness of the nebulous (but, as any performer will acknowledge, real) feedback loop between performer and audience. But, when the performers attempt to nuance a gesture or phrase in response to the aforementioned relationships, an unrelenting and unaware companion-the digitally recorded music with which they perform-thwarts them. In this

situation, they cannot hold a spectacular balance because if they did, the music would race on ahead of them and a subsequent phrase of the dance would suffer as they attempt to catch up.



So, the answer to my own question is, I provide interactive control to the performers as a way of imposing the chaos of the organic on to the fixed nature of the electronic, ensuring that the digital materials remain as fluid and alive as the performers themselves. There are two important implications that arise from this approach, namely:

1. we must give the performers latitude to improvise if they are to take advantage of such interactivity; and
2. the audience must have some understanding of the interaction to complete the loop between audience and performer.

I want to examine these points in some detail, using musical models of

performance that are rendered more expressive because of their real-time interaction.

In terms of providing interactive control, and the importance of improvisational decision making, let us consider the classical orchestra. The music played by the orchestra (the 'media') has been precisely notated well in advance of the performance. Yet, relying on the same skill, awareness and feedback from the audience cited above, it is the conductor who will determine the music's timing and dynamics from moment to moment, and thus its final realisation. (This model seems particularly appropriate when applied to interactive dance performance, as both rely on gesture as the means of interactive control.) The conductor of the classical orchestra does not traditionally reformulate the music in a manner so radical as to change the nature of the piece, but it is certainly possible. And, because the conductor is at some level improvising, it is possible that such a reformulation could happen at any time.



It could be argued that by changing only two parameters (again, timing and dynamics) the conductor cannot fundamentally change a musical work. The converse was proved to me by an exercise I witnessed as a student. My teacher Morton Subotnick gave the dozen or so composers in my class the first two pages of Pierre Boulez's *Piano Sonata No. 1* with the following instructions: we were to change the dynamics and octave transposition 1 of the notes freely, but no other parameter was to be changed. The following week each of our manipulated versions was performed for us, but without identifying who had done the work. To my amazement, I found that I could detect who had 'composed' each and every version because I was intimately familiar with the style of my colleagues. Even with only two parameters open to change, the results were absolutely personal. It follows then that a skilled interactive performer would be equally able to impose their own, quite personal, interpretation on the pre-composed

media materials under their control—even if the number of parameters they can manipulate are limited. This belief has become a core strategy in my approach to creating live interactive art works.

It is worth noting that, while we could manipulate only two parameters in the exercise, we were allowed to do so ‘freely’-without limitation. As applied to live interaction this tells us that, while the number of parameters that a performer can manipulate might be limited, the range of those manipulations must be profound enough to allow the performer to place his or her personal interpretive stamp on the material.



Essential improvisation

Another musical model to consider is jazz, as it speaks clearly to the importance of improvisation and to the audience’s understanding of that process. Take the specific example of a jazz pianist. It may seem obvious, but because of historical or personal experience we know that when a

finger is placed against a key on the piano, and the key is pressed down, a musical note is produced. This taken-for-granted understanding allows us to ‘know’ that the pianist is playing his instrument as we watch him perform. (Indeed, quite a scandal ensues if the audience discovers this relationship has been faked—see Milli Vanilli, circa 1990.) If we know the jazz form, we come with the understanding and expectation that the music will be invented in the moment of performance. So, we experience a certain kind of thrill as we watch a performer instantaneously organise and artfully play musical materials before our eyes. The real-time nature of the music’s creation is so integral that it is part and parcel of its meaning. To not understand this is to not be able to fully appreciate the art form.

It would seem that quite a similar appreciation should be possible for interactive performances, but in fact there are several obstacles to overcome. When presenting such works, we cannot *a priori* rely on the expectations and understanding the jazz audience brings to a performance. This is because:

1. the audience may not be aware that there is some level of improvisation occurring, and
2. because the audience has no prior

understanding of the 'instrument' with which the performer controls that manipulation.



Regarding these two points, consider my company *Troika Ranch*. We create dance theatre works that are most often presented on a proscenium stage, a setting that historically features work that is composed in advance. So, while we do give our performers a fairly broad range of improvisational latitude when performing, the audience will generally assume that what they are seeing is not improvised at all if only because of the setting in which the work takes place. This problem of perception is exacerbated by the audience's lack of experience with the instruments

being used to manipulate the media. Our dancers wear wireless sensors on their bodies (*MidiDancer*) that allow them to manipulate digital media in real time. These interactive instruments are quite similar to their musical counterparts in that they

translate gesture into another form, so one might assume that the audience could easily understand their function. In fact, because these instruments are new, unique, and unfamiliar, the audience has no historical or personal experience with them. So, in practice, it is quite difficult for the audience to perceive that a *Troika Ranch* performance is in fact quite similar to the jazz performance described above.

This is not to say that an interactive work cannot be appreciated at face value. In our example of the jazz pianist, even those who do not understand the inner workings of a piano or that the performer is improvising can appreciate the musical result. So too it should be with interactive performance. But, an audience's understanding that the performer has a virtuosic command of his or her instrument and that he or she is creating something new in the moment of performance adds yet another layer of 'liveness' to the experience, which I would argue is a core rationale for adding interaction to the mix in the first place.



Fundamental increments

I want to entertain a worthwhile assertion by one colleague of mine. Namely, that my use of the musical models described above is reactionary because it imposes a kind of tunnel vision, inhibiting the development of truly new grammars/strategies for the creation and realisation of new performance. In my view, this argument is flawed because it presupposes that the use of sensory technologies and digital media offers some kind of radical shift in the nature of live performance itself.

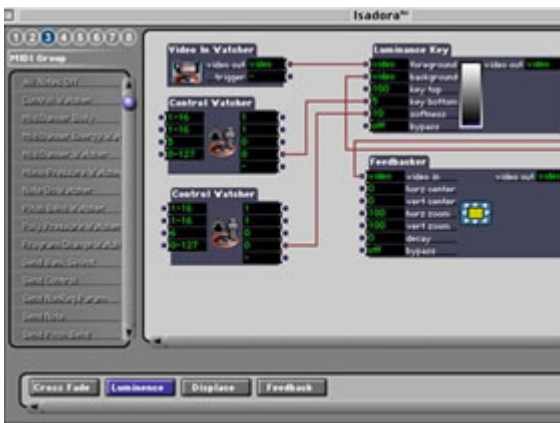
Countering this argument fully is beyond the scope of this essay, but let me address it briefly by considering what I think we can agree was a revolutionary technological innovation: photography. The ability to immediately capture and reproduce an image changed the public's experience of the world almost overnight. Take as an example the early horrific images of soldiers strewn over the battlefield during the

U.S. Civil War. These widely published photographs brought an immediacy of experience to the viewer that was inconceivable previously and shaped public opinion of that war. If the integration of cutting edge technology in performance was similarly radical in nature, would not its impact be as immediate and unstoppable as that of photography?

There is a vague feeling in our time that any new and sufficiently unfamiliar technology holds the promise of radically altering the fabric of our society. This belief is in part factual, based on the transformational technological innovations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is also based on highly suspect marketing claims that reached their saturation apex at the height of the Internet boom. And, in the field of live technology and performance, artists have often enough made public claim to the potential for revolutionary new forms. (I must plead guilty to doing just that during the early days of the *MidiDancer* -not that I didn't believe it to be true at the time.) I would argue, however, that the ramifications of new media and sensory technology in performance are much more likely to be incremental than fundamental.

The software program *Photoshop* provides a useful example. Its central metaphor of painting on a canvas is rooted in a tradition that everyone

understands. The ability to save multiple versions, the notion of 'undo', and the introduction of algorithmic processes that can be applied to the image (i.e. filters) do change the working process in important ways. But, while we can agree that skilled artists have used this tool to make images that are arresting, stunning or beautiful, the nature of the image itself has not been changed. This lies in contrast to photography, which depicted the world with a sense of reality (implying both truth and objectivity) that had never been experienced before-it redefined image.



Now, my colleague might reasonably argue that the reason that *Photoshop* did not redefine the image was because its metaphor was based on

existing models of ~~existing models of~~ *Photography*. I would counter that it was not possible to go beyond the existing models because ~~existing models of~~ simply did not alter the essential notion of image. The impact of new technology and interactivity on live performance is far more akin to that of ~~existing models of~~ than it is to photography, and so it seems to me that applying existing models to technologically enhanced performance is valid and useful.

Regardless, I do think that the use of interactivity in live performance is essential. Live performance is perhaps the most inefficient of contemporary art forms, because you cannot do with it what you can with digitally stored artworks: duplicate and inexpensively deliver it to a large audience. But, it is specifically the ineffable quality of liveness that draws me to create and attend performance. By using new technology to allow our performers to become real-time creators, and by asking our audience to be present to their on-the-fly artistry, we ensure that each performance of a work is absolutely unrepeatable, which may be the boldest move of all.

Photoshop

Link index

The Gate: Open Considerations – Part 2

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The Importance Of Being Interactive